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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1983

Edited by John E. Rielly

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

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Introduction

The survey on which this report is based was conducted in November and December of 1982, midway in the first term of President Ronald Reagan. It came during a period of prolonged recession, the worst since the end of World War II. Like most of his predecessors for the past two decades, President Reagan found himself embattled midway in his term. Although the next presidential election is a full two years off, he already faces new challengers within his own party as well as from the Democratic opposition. The governmental instability that has plagued American society since the end of the Eisenhower era is likely to continue into the mid-1980's if not beyond.

This is the third public opinion survey and analysis sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. It is being released exactly eight years after the first which was conducted in November and December of 1975, and four years after the second which was done in the same months of 1978. The results of both surveys were summarized in two reports published in March of those years entitled "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1974" and "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1979". In the four year period since the last survey, we witnessed the continued expansion of Soviet military power and demonstrations in Afghanistan and Poland of the Soviet government's determination to maintain its power in countries on it borders. At the same time American power and influence continued to wane in certain areas. The fall of the Shah of Iran, on whom the U.S. relied to maintain stability in the Persian Gulf for over two decades, demonstrated the impotence of the American government to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf or its citizens in Khomeni's Iran.

The election of Governor Ronald Reagan was due in part to the widespread perception of continuing American weakness in a post-Vietnam world, to failure to stop either the Soviet military buildup or the extension of Soviet military political and diplomatic influence in Southwest Asia and Western Europe.

The four-year period also witnessed a change in the developed world from a decade of economic stagnation to one of actual recession, leading to the highest unemployment and bankruptcy rate experienced in Europe and North America in forty years. As the recession diminished the world demand for oil in the early 1980's, world oil prices declined and the effectiveness of the OPEC cartel eroded. As the recession persisted, economic issues increasingly dominated the international politics of the OECD countries. Commercial competition between North America and Europe and Japan intensified and rising protectionism in all three areas threatened to jeopardize the competitive world trading system that had developed over the past three decades. Following years of high interest rates at home, the dollar rebounded in foreign currency markets in 1981 and 1982, increasing in value as much as seventy percent against the French franc and significant if smaller percentages against other leading world currencies. By the beginning of 1983, the stability of the private banking system of the OECD countries was threatened by the huge debts accumulated by a few large, middle-class, and newly industrialized countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, which by 1983 were unable to meet their debt repayment obligations.

Although economic issues occupied a great deal of attention during this period, the eruption of war in Lebanon in 1982 was a grim reminder of Middle East volatility and the persistence of seemingly irreconcilable conflicts. It also brought a need for the United States to continue to play a large role — some thought a larger role — in preserving the stability of that area.

One of the central questions of this survey, as of the two previous ones, is the extent to which the American public and its leaders continue to support the active involvement of the U.S. overseas. The question of the role of the U.S. in the world remains central to this study. In addition, we sought to address such issues as the relationship between domestic and foreign policy priorities, the appropriate response to the increasing diplomatic and political as well as military reach of the Soviet Union, the shift in foreign policy priorities, and the roles of various individuals and institutions in the implementation of foreign policy.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct this survey of both the public and national leaders. The popular survey involved a stratified, systematic national sample of 1,546 respondents, representing Americans 18 years of age and older. Questions were weighted to eliminate sampling distortion with respect to age, sex or race. The field work for this part of the study was conducted between October 29 and November 6, 1982. The leadership sample included 341 individuals representing Americans in senior positions with knowledge of international affairs. We chose roughly equal proportions from the national political and governmental world, including senators and representatives (members of the Foreign Relations, International Relations and Armed Services Committees) and officials with international responsibilities from the State, Treasury, Defense and other departments. Participants were also drawn from the business community (chairmen, international vice presidents of large corporations as well as leaders of business associations); communications field (editors and publishers of major newspapers, wire service executives, television broadcasters); from education (presidents and scholars from major colleges and universities); and foreign policy institutes.

A smaller number of leaders was also drawn from national unions, churches, voluntary organizations and other ethnic organizations. Interviews in the leadership survey were conducted from early November to mid-December 1982.

All interviewing, collating and tabulating was done through the facilities of the Gallup Organization Incorporated. The design and contents of the questionnaire were prepared by the editor and the following consultants: Bernard Cohen, Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin at Madison; Arthur Cyr, Vice President and Program Director of the

Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; Benjamin Page, Associate Professor of Political Science, the University of Chicago; William Schneider, Senior Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute; and Glenn Dempsey, Computer Programmer of the National Opinion Research Center.

We have benefited from a preliminary analysis by the Gallup Organization. The analysis and interpretation of data presented in this report represent the joint efforts of the above group working with the editor. Once again we have published the analysis of the data as quickly as possible after the field work was completed. The response to the earlier reports confirms our judgment that the advantages of a brief but timely summary analysis outweigh the disadvantages of being unable to do a comprehensive study in so short a period of time. The report should be considered in that light. The data derived from this study will be placed on deposit with the Inter-Unviersity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut, and will be available to scholars.

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to my principal collaborators: Bernard Cohen, Arthur Cyr, Benjamin Page, Glenn Dempsey and William Schneider. Special thanks are due Nora Dell, Editor and Director of Publications of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who once again played a critical role in every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report, and was responsible for all aspects of the publication. Special thanks also to Nancy Kickert and Linda Crance, who displayed skill and persistence in putting the manuscript on the word processor and seeing it through to completion. Thanks also are due to members of the Council staff who volunteered their help in various stages in production of this report, and especially to Norma Newkirk and Cindy Unger.

On behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations I want to express our gratitude to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and especially to President John Corbally and Executive Vice President James Furman, for providing the entire financing of the project, including the preparation, publication and dissemination of this report.

John E. Rielly
President
The Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1983

Summary Findings

Despite the tumultuous world events of the past four years—the seizure of American hostages in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the failure of the SALT II treaty, declaration of martial law in Poland, the war in the Falkland Islands, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, worldwide hyperinflation followed by worldwide recession — the foreign policy attitudes of the American public have maintained a basic stability. This continuity is all the more surprising because the period 1978-1982 witnessed the election to the presidency of Ronald Reagan, who pledged to set the nation on a new path in foreign as well as domestic policy. Yet there is no evidence of any fundamental reorientation of the American public's foreign policy values or priorities during the past four years.

Certainly, the shifts in public opinion between 1978 and 1982 were less substantial than the shifts between 1974 and 1978, when the views of the American public became more conservative and nationalistic. In The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' 1978 and 1982 surveys of American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy, cross-sections of the national electorate were asked to assess the importance of 13 different foreign policy goals, including "containing communism," "promoting and defending human rights in other countries," and "helping to improve the standard of living of less-developed nations." In 11 out of the 13 queries, the data showed no significant change.

The American public in 1982 is concerned about the same foreign policy priorities that it was concerned about in 1978—peace and strength. Between 1974 and 1981, the public grew increasingly insecure about the perceived growing military imbalance between the United States and the Soviet Union. This preoccupation with military security became a major obsession following the events in Iran and Afghanistan at the end of 1979, and it played no small role in the 1980 presidential election. One of the things Ronald Reagan has accomplished in office, this study shows, is to give the American public a greater sense of military security, no doubt in part because of his administration's unprecedented peacetime increases in military spending. On the other hand, the public now exhibits a growing preoccupation with peace and arms control — also as a result of the administration's defense buildup as well as the atmosphere of increased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

While the American public shares the Reagan administration's paramount concern with East-West relations and military security, the data show important disparities between public opinion and administration policies in key-issue areas, including defense spending, arms control, foreign aid, detente, and trade policy. The survey results also reveal that, while the Reagan administration can depend on the support of influential elite groups on some issues (including foreign economic aid and free trade), there are many issues on which elite opinion differs sharply from administration policy and is closer to the views of the mass public (arms control and detente, for example).

Those are some of the principal conclusions of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' 1983 study of American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy. This study is based on two parallel surveys:

1) personal interviews with a nationwide sample of 1,547 American adults, conducted by the Gallup Organization in late October and November 1982, and
2) personal and telephone interviews with a leadership sample of 341 prominent individuals from government, international business, labor, academia, the mass media, religious institutions, private foreign policy organizations, and special interest groups, conducted during November and December 1982.

The 1982 surveys were the third in a sequence of studies of American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy sponsored by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Previous public and leadership surveys were conducted in 1974 and 1978.

ECONOMIC CONCERNS AND SELF-INTEREST

The basic reason for the continuity in foreign-policy attitudes is the continuity of the public's major concerns from 1978 to 1982. In 1982 as in 1978, economic issues were given top priority by both the public and the leaders as the biggest problems facing the country. The nature of these economic concerns did shift in 1982, however, with unemployment displacing inflation as the number-one national problem.

In a time of deep recession, preoccupation with domestic economic issues reinforces the concern for national self-interest that was evident four years ago. Thus, protecting the jobs of American workers, keeping the value of the dollar high, and securing adequate supplies of energy were rated much higher in importance than such altruistic foreign policy objectives as promoting democracy, defending human rights in other countries, and protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression.

INTERNATIONALISM

In line with this persistent concern for economic self-interest, 1982 results show a continuing erosion of the post-World War II public consensus that the national interest requires active participation by the United States in world affairs. Only a bare majority of the public now holds the opinion that such international activism is best for the future of the country while over a third now say that it would be better if the United States "stayed out" of world affairs. On the other hand, the nation's leaders remain virtually unanimous in support of an active U.S. world role.

The view that the U.S. plays a less important and less powerful role as a world leader today, as compared with the past, continues to grow among the mass public and to characterize a majority of the leaders. However, most Americans do not really prefer it that way. Only a small minority of the public and very few leaders would like to see the United States play a less important role as a world leader in the future. The prevailing view in both groups is that the U.S. should play a *more* important role in the future.

The generally low level of internationalism is reflected in the public's limited support of foreign aid. Barely half of the public favors the idea of giving economic aid to other countries while majorities oppose giving military aid or even selling military equipment. Of seven federal government spending programs tested, foreign economic aid and foreign military aid were the least popular. As in previous years, majorities of the public wanted to cut back spending on both.

AREAS OF VITAL CONCERN

A mood of security-consciousness can be seen in areas of the world where the public perceives U.S. interest to have increased over the past four years. They include neighboring countries in North and South America, our principal European and Asian allies, and a communist country threatened with Soviet intervention (Poland). On the other hand, the public's interest in the People's Republic of China and most Third World countries has declined.

The public sees the United States as having vital interests in four specific areas of the world: 1) Western Hemisphere countries, for reasons of geographic proximity; 2) Western Europe, where the U.S. has strong cultural and economic ties and where our security interests vis-à-vis the Soviet Union are clearest; 3) Japan, our principal trading partner, economic rival, and Asian security outpost; and 4) the Middle East, including Israel, Egypt, and the oil-producing Arab countries. The leaders tend to have a broader view of our vital interests, although the rank-ordering of countries is roughly the same.

Public concern over Saudi Arabia was especially striking. Presumably because of that country's abundant oil reserves, Saudi Arabia was perceived as one of the top countries in terms of vital interest to the United States. The coming to power of communists in Saudi Arabia was considered more of a threat to American interests than communists coming to power in France, Iran, El Salvador, or Taiwan. A substantial proportion of the public would be willing to send U.S. troops if the Arabs cut off all oil shipments to the United States. A quarter of the public and a majority of the leaders would be willing to send troops if Iran invaded Saudi Arabia. Clearly, the Middle East is now seen as an area of major U.S. interest in the world, along with our neighbors and traditional allies.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The 1982 results indicate some slippage in public favorability toward Israel and a significant drop in favorability toward Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The explanation lies in a widespread negative assessment of Israeli policies, particularly among the leaders. A majority of the public and two-thirds of the leaders disapproved of Israel's recent actions in Lebanon. President Reagan's Middle East peace plan, which was rejected by the Israeli government, is favored two-to-one by the American public, as is formation of a separate and independent Palestinian state. A strong majority of the public feels that the U.S. should require that all weapons sent to Israel be used for defensive purposes only. About one-third of the public and one-quarter of the leaders want to see U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel decreased or stopped altogether.

On the other hand, Americans continue to show a strong margin of sympathy for Israel over the Arabs. And despite recent events in Lebanon, PLO Leader Yassir Arafat ranks far below Menachem Begin in personal popularity. The long-term sympathy trends in the Middle East show that the 1982 events in Lebanon did have an effect on American public opinion. Sympathy for the Arab cause is now somewhat higher than it was before June 1982. On the other hand, sympathy for Israel, which had gone up in early 1982, returned to a relatively high level toward the end of the year. Overall, public opinion now shows more sympathy for both sides than has been the case in the past.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Distrust of the Soviet Union remains strong. When respondents were asked to express their favorability toward 24 different countries on a "feeling thermometer," the Soviet Union came out at the bottom of the list, having dropped 8° since 1978. Willingness to send troops if the Soviet Union invaded Western Europe or Japan went up significantly in the mass public. Former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev was rated very low in personal favorability, above only Yassir Arafat and the Ayatollah Khomeini. Americans maintained their commitment to the NATO alliance at a steady level. And there was somewhat more support than in 1978 for restricting U.S.-Soviet trade and cultural contacts.

This negativism tended to apply specifically to the Soviet Union and not necessarily toward all communist countries. While Cuba's favorability rating was almost as low as the Soviet Union's and had also gone down since 1978, ratings for Poland and the People's Republic of China were signficantly higher and had tended to improve. There was no change in the low perceived importance of "containing communism" as a foreign policy goal or in the reluctance to send U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea or if the People's Republic of China invaded Taiwan. And most Americans did not perceive a "great threat" to U.S. interests if communists came to power in France, Iran, El Salvador, or Taiwan.

Most measures of peaceful cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union retain considerable popularity. Thus, a majority of the public continues to support arms control agreements, cultural and educational exchanges, and joint efforts to solve energy problems while majorities oppose grain embargoes and prohibitions against scientific exchanges. However, a majority of Americans does favor limiting sales of advanced U.S. computers to the Soviet Union, and a plurality supports restrictions on U.S.-Soviet trade.

The general view of the Soviet Union remains one of wariness. Long-term polling evidence indicates that anti-Soviet feeling increased significantly in the United States between 1974 and 1981. This antipathy, perhaps generated by fear of nuclear confrontation, appears to have gone down since the height of the Iran and Afghanistan crises, but the level of distrust remains quite high. Concern over U.S.-Soviet relations is also quite high. Among foreign policy leaders, "relations with the Soviet Union" now predominates as the leading foreign policy problem facing the country. In the mass public, concern over nuclear war has risen markedly.

MILITARY ISSUES

Some of the most pronounced shifts in public opinion over the three Chicago Council surveys have been on the issue of defense spending. Between 1974 and 1978, support for increased defense spending grew substantially. In 1974 sentiment for cutting back the defense budget outweighed sentiment for increasing it by as much as three-to-one. In 1978 there was much more sentiment for expanding rather than cutting back the defense budget. The 1982 data indicate a reversal of this pro-defense trend. Support for in-

creasing the defense budget has fallen by about ten percentage points since 1978 while the desire to cut military spending has grown proportionately. The attitudes of leaders have moved in the same direction on this issue.

One obvious explanation is, of course, President Reagan's budget policies during the first two years of his administration. Polls show that the public's demand for more military spending — that is, for a stronger national defense — reached a peak in January 1981 when Ronald Reagan took office. Reagan immediately set about substantially increasing the military budget. By November 1981, pressure for higher defense spending had dropped by about half. With the onset of a major recession, deep cuts in domestic social spending, and a federal budget deficit approaching $200 billion, public opinion—and leadership opinion—were no longer in support of the administration's plan for continuing to make major increases in the military budget. It should be noted, however, that most Americans at the end of 1982 were not in favor of *decreasing* the defense budget either. The prevailing sentiment in public opinion is to keep defense spending about the same.

Another factor behind declining pressure for higher military spending is the belief that the U.S. and the Soviet Union are moving closer to military parity. A plurality of the public and a substantial majority of leaders now think that the U.S. and the Soviet Union are about equal militarily. In 1978 the desire to increase defense spending was very strongly related to concern about the Soviet Union as a military threat to the United States. That linkage is much weaker today. Thus, the perception of U.S. military inferiority, which contributed to public and elite pressure for hghter defense spending a few years ago, seems to have abated.

ARMS CONTROL

What has grown, however, is concern over the possibility of war. In the 1978 survey, so few respondents spontaneously mentioned war or nuclear war as foreign policy concerns that this response was not even separately reported. In 1982, however, over 10% mentioned war as a major issue while the proportion concerned about the nuclear arms race nearly doubled. Together, one-quarter of the public now mentions either war or the arms race as the biggest foreign policy problem facing the country, making this general issue the public's largest single foreign policy concern.

Consequently, survey results show substantial public and leadership support for arms control measures. Three-quarters of the public and almost all of the leaders favored arms control agreements between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Respondents also were asked about "a mutual, verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons." Over half of the public and four-fifths of the leaders felt that the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons if the Soviets also agree to stop. Only minorities of the public and very small minorities of the leaders felt either that the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons even if the Soviets do not or that the U.S. should continue to build nuclear weapons no matter what the Soviets do. Moreover, strong majorities among both the public and the leaders favored a freeze "right now if the Soviets would agree." This position was much more popular than the Reagan administration's view that there should be a freeze "only after the U.S. builds up its nuclear weapons more."

INTERVENTIONISM

When asked about U.S. military intervention overseas, the public revealed a sharpened capacity to distinguish situations that involve our vital interests from those that do not. A majority of the public and of the leaders would be willing to send U.S. troops if either Japan or Western Europe were invaded by the Soviet Union. In the case of the public, support for sending troops in both cases is significantly higher than it was four years ago. The Middle East is another area where vital interests are widely perceived. Though still short of a majority, increasing proportions of the public and of the leaders would be willing to send U.S. troops if the Arabs cut off oil shipments to the U.S. or if Arab forces invaded Israel. Most leaders also favored the use of force if Iran invaded Saudi Arabia.

There was much less support for the use of U.S. troops in areas not perceived to be vital to U.S. interests, nor did support for interventionism increase in those areas. Few Americans favored sending troops if South Africa invaded Angola, if the People's Republic of China invaded Taiwan, or if the government of El Salvador were about to be defeated by "leftist rebels." Troop involvement in these circumstances was even less popular among leaders. Notably, the public was more willing to send U.S. troops if the Soviet Union invaded Poland, and leaders were more favorable to intervention if North Korea invaded South Korea.

ASSESSMENT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

The self-image of American foreign policy continues to be ambivalent. Two-thirds of the public and almost seven-eighths of the leaders believe, as they did four and eight years ago, that the U.S. has been a force for good in the world since World War II. On the other hand, almost three-quarters of the public continues to feel that "the Vietnam war was more than a mistake; it was fundamentally wrong and immoral" — a proportion unchanged since 1978. Leaders continue to be divided on this point, as they were four years ago. Moreover, Americans' sense of self-esteem continues to deteriorate. Increasing percentages of the public and the leaders feel that the U.S. is less respected in the world than it was a decade ago.

The survey also uncovered some evidence of populist and anti-establishment pressures on U.S. foreign policy. The public tended to feel that public opinion and Congress should play a more important role in determining foreign policy. The data also showed a shift among both the public and the leaders toward a preference for Congress to play a stronger role vis-à-vis the president in determining foreign policy. At the same time, both samples moved in the direction of endorsing a weaker role for the military in the foreign policy process.

Finally, it is significant that the news media are regarded as more reliable sources of information on foreign policy than the presidency, the State Department, and foreign policy leaders in Congress. Generally, institutions that are thought of as more directly responsive to the people — Congress, public opinion, and the media — are more widely trusted than such elite institutions as the president, the secretary of state, the State Department, and the military. The public would like to "popularize" foreign policy by seeing the first group of institutions play a larger role.

GAP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION, LEADERS, AND PUBLIC

The 1982 survey gives ample evidence of gaps between public opinion and leadership opinion, on the one hand, and between both groups and administration policy on the other. The gap between the public and the leaders is basically one of

internationalism. The leaders are much more supportive of an active U.S. role in the world, including foreign economic and military aid. In most cases the leaders are more likely to support sending U.S. troops to intervene in crisis situations, especially where our vital interest is clear. Similarly, the leadership stratum is more likely to see communism as a threat in areas where the U.S. has a strong vital interest and less likely to see communism as a threat in peripheral areas. But the leaders are not necessarily more hard-line than the public. They tend to be more favorable to U.S.-Soviet cooperation, to arms control agreements, and to normalizing relations with Cuba.

A pronounced difference occurs over the issue of protectionism. The public continues to give majority support to tariffs and restrictions on imports while leadership opinion is strongly opposed to protectionism. The point is that the leadership group is more willing to support all kinds of international commitments whether they are cooperative, like trade and treaties, or confrontational, like troop intervention.

The survey also reveals significant gaps between public opinion and administration policies in many areas. The public does not approve of foreign military or economic aid or even sales of military equipment to other countries. Most Americans support an immediate nuclear freeze if the Soviets agree, and favor efforts to normalize relations with Cuba. The public did not support President Reagan's initial efforts to apply sanctions against our allies to persuade them not to help the Soviets build a natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. And the public is favorable to many forms of cooperation with the Soviet Union. The gap between the public and the administration is especially pronounced on spending issues. Public opinion has grown more supportive of spending for such domestic social programs as aid to education, highway expenditures, and welfare and relief programs; but sentiment for expanding the defense budget has diminished. This is precisely opposite of the direction the Reagan administration has been urging.

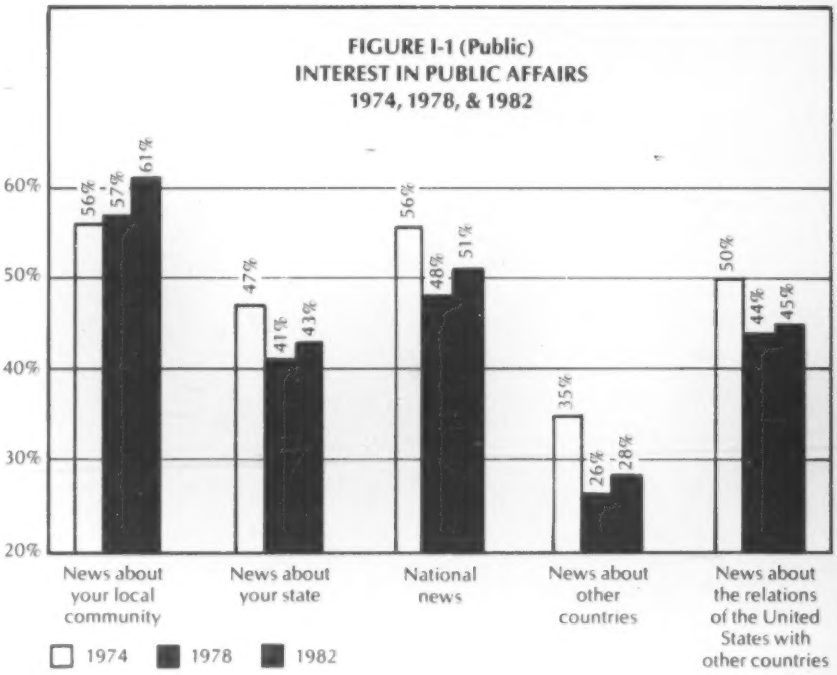
It also should be noted that the public rates government's handling of most recent foreign policy crises—including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the declaration of martial law in Poland, the situation in El Salvador, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the seizure of U.S. hostages in Iran—as fair-to-poor. A majority gives the government positive marks in only one situation, the war between Great Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands, where the United States was only minimally involved.

Can the administration rely on the leadership stratum for support in situations where public opinion is not favorable? The evidence indicates that foreign policy leaders stand with the administration only in a few areas, most notably foreign aid, certain cases of troop intervention, and free trade. In many other areas—including arms control, defense spending, human rights, cooperation with the Soviet Union, restrictions on CIA activity, and relations with Cuba—leadership sentiment is even less supportive of administration policy than is public opinion.

I. Priority of Foreign Policy

We may begin this analysis of public opinion and foreign policy by first asking how important foreign policy issues are for both the public and leaders in the United States. How does the priority attached to foreign affairs compare with that accorded domestic policy issues? How closely do people follow these different sorts of issues — both generally and in specific terms? To put the matter a little differently, what is their "map" of public affairs, and how and where does foreign policy fit into it? Where, in a time of serious economic troubles all over the world, is their international horizon?

FIGURE I-1 (Public)
INTEREST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS
1974, 1978, & 1982



ATTENTIVENESS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Four years ago we noted that the decade of the 1970s was characterized by many commentators as "quiescent and inward-looking." That description still applies at the beginning of the 1980s. Following a generation of intense international activism after World War II, a generation in which the primacy of foreign policy was barely challenged in a rich and growing economy, the "natural order" seems fundamentally to have shifted. The primacy of foreign policy is now regularly challenged, in reaction not only to the Vietnam war but equally to the battering of the American and the world economies. Simply put, the economic recession that engulfed the United States and much of the world in the early 1980s has entrenched the nation's preoccupation with domestic affairs. That will be evident throughout this survey.

With the perspective of eight years, we can see (Figure I-1) that the American public is more interested in local news than any other kind. And specifically its interest in local news remains significantly greater than in news about other countries or in news concerning America's relations with other countries. The general pattern of stated interest across all fields of news is essentially unchanged from 1978.

It is interesting to compare this general interest in news of different types with the expressed interest in news about specific issues and events. Two important differences emerge from this comparison:

1) Overall, the proportion of the population who follow specific events in the news tends to be somewhat smaller than the proportion who declare a general interest in such news. For example, while 45% declare that they are "very interested" in news about relations with other countries, only 17% say they have followed news about our trade problems with Japan "very closely," and only 22% say the same about negotiations on strategic arms limitations. While 51% declare that they are "very interested" in national news, which was matched in the case of news about President Reagan's economic policy (51% said they followed it "very closely"), only 24% said they followed the 1982 Congressional elections that closely.

2) The differences between interest in foreign and domestic (national) news tend to shrink along with the contraction of interest in specific news items. That is to say, some of the professed disinterest in foreign affairs seems to disappear when it comes to specific news or events. For example, while 24% say they followed the 1982 Congressional elections very closely, similar or larger proportions claimed to have followed "very closely" events in Poland (26%), strategic arms limitations negotiations (22%), and the Middle East situation (33%).

On the basis of responses to the above questions, we have constructed an index of attentiveness to foreign affairs news. Those who scored in the top third on the additive scale of attentiveness we call the "attentive public," and we will from time to time draw attention to the differences between the views of this group and the views of the medium and low attentives

on particular subjects. In 1978, 21% of the sample were among the attentive public. In 1982, on an index composed of the same general questions (interest in news about other countries and in news about our relations with other countries) and a different set of specific issues that one could follow in the news, the size of the attentive public was virtually identical—22%.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

When we asked people about the biggest problems confronting the country today, it is not surprising that economic issues came out on top, just as they have in our two prior surveys. This has been true for a decade now, since the end of the Vietnam war. But for three decades prior to 1973, according to a series of Gallup polls, foreign policy issues dominated public concerns.

Overall, Table I-1 shows not only the continued dominance of economic problems but also a small rise in the responses in *both* the economic *and* the foreign policy categories. In the economic category the net increase is attributable to 18% of the respondents who expressed an undifferentiated concern over the state of the economy. In the foreign affairs category it is due to 9% of the respondents who expressed wide-ranging concerns about the problems caused by nuclear weapons.

Whereas inflation clearly ranked as the biggest problem in 1978, with 67% of the public listing it first, it was just as clearly superseded in 1982 by concern about unemployment, which was mentioned by 64% compared to 19% four years earlier. Concern about inflation came in second, with 35%, and an undifferentiated concern for the problems of the economy came in third, with 18%. As Table I-1 indicates, there is no question that unemployment has emerged by far as the dominant issue at the end of 1982. In 1978 the average annual inflation rate was 7.7% and rising; in 1982 it was about 5%. In 1978 the average annual unemployment rate was 6%; in 1982 it was nearly 11% and its direction was unclear.

Among opinion leaders the same preoccupation with economic issues in general, and unemployment in particular, is evident, with an undifferentiated concern for the problems of the economy and unemployment virtually tied (at 54% and 53%, respectively). Concern about inflation was fourth at 19%, a dramatic drop from 85% in 1978.

On foreign policy issues, the overall category "foreign policy" showed an increase in the number of the public who listed it as a major issue (from 4% to 6%) while concern about defense declined (2%) as did concern about "too much foreign aid" (3%). Concern about nuclear war and nuclear threat emerged as a major item here and throughout the survey. In general foreign policy problems ran far behind domestic problems in the public's estimation. The gap was (predictably) narrower for the foreign policy leaders, but even among the leaders economic problems outweighed foreign policy problems by two-by-one. The largest single foreign policy problem for both groups of respondents was the nuclear arms question, though the leaders were twice as likely as the general public to see it as a problem. It was followed closely on both sides by a general, undifferentiated concern for U.S. foreign policy. Significantly, the leaders also recorded a substantial decline (from 21% to 9%) in concern for the problem of national defense. Coupled with the rise in concern for nuclear war, this suggests some re-thinking on the part of the leadership group about the nature of the military problem.

TABLE I-1. Most important problems

"What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today?"[1]

	Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978
ECONOMY				
Unemployment	64%[2]	19%	53%	25%
Inflation	35	67	19	85
Taxes	6	18	3	6
Economy, unspecified	18	na	54	na
ENERGY	3	11	2	23
GOVERNMENT				
Big government	2	6	1	10
Government spending	5	9	12	13
Corruption	4	6	2	2
FOREIGN POLICY				
World peace	6	3	7	5
Middle East	2	1	2	4
Too much foreign aid	2	5	1	•
National defense	3	5	9	21
International economy, balance of payments	21	4	60	10
U.S. foreign policy	8	5	13	10
Nuclear war/freeze	9	na	20	na
SOCIAL PROBLEMS				
Crime	16	9	3	2
Drug abuse	3	1	1	1
Welfare abuse	3	8	1	3
Racial problems	2	3	2	4
Environment	2	2	4	4
Immorality	6	2	5	3
Labor unions	2	1	1	1
Abortion	•	1	1	•
SOCIAL WELFARE				
Health insurance	1	5	1	7
Elderly	6	4	2	1
Education	2	4	4	3
Poverty	2	3	2	3
Housing	1	•	1	•

•less than ½%

1. There is a very slight change in the wording of this question in 1982. In 1974 and 1978 we asked respondents to name "the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about." Because the role of the federal government in the solution of national problems has itself increasingly become perceived as a political problem since the 1980 elections, we decided that comparability with prior surveys would be enhanced if we dropped the qualifying phrase "that you would like to see the federal government do something about."

2. The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because of multiple responses.

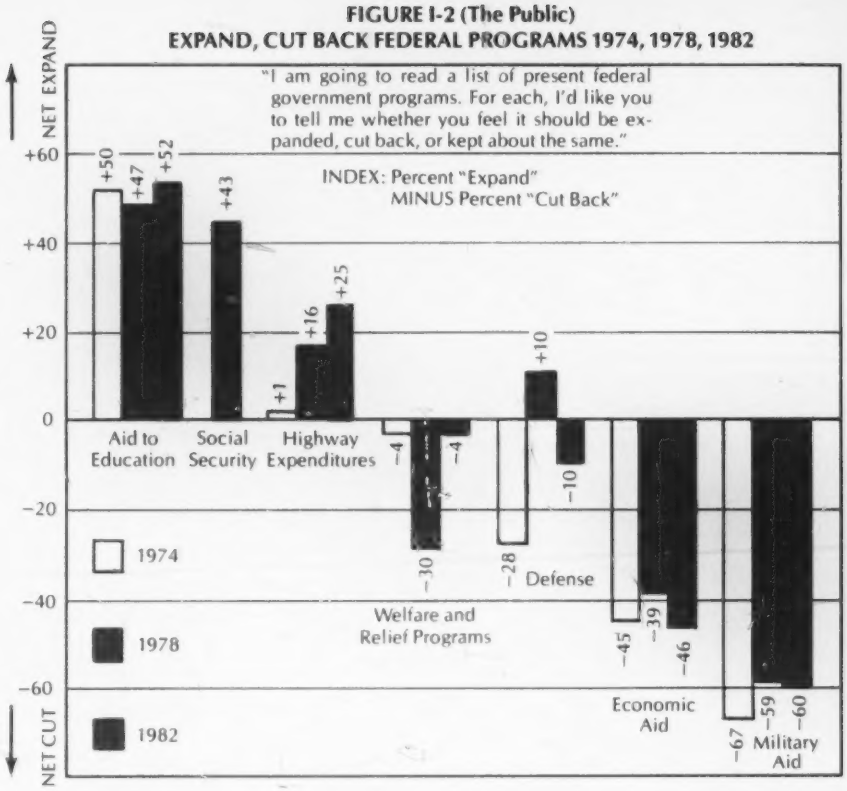
PRIORITIES AMONG GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Another way to weigh the relative importance of foreign policy in the thinking of our respondents is to compare the government programs that they would like to see expanded or cut back. For this purpose we listed three foreign policy programs—defense spending and economic and military aid to foreign nations—and four domestic programs — education, highway expenditures, welfare and relief programs, and Social Security. Social Security was added this year and farm subsidies were deleted. Thus, of the seven programs we have a trend line on six. As in past reports, we have calculated an index of support for each program by subtracting the percentage of those who wanted it cut back from the percentage of those who wanted it expanded. Results for all three surveys are shown in Figure I-2, where positive scores—those above the line—indicate net public support for expansion of programs, and negative scores—those below the line—indicate net public desire to cut them back. For example, the score of +43 for Social Security is derived from 49% who wish to see the program expanded and 6% who wish to see it cut back.

Figure I-2 shows starkly the priority accorded by the public to domestic programs over foreign policy programs. All three foreign policy programs have negative scores (−60, −46, −10); three domestic programs have positive scores (+52, +43, +25); and only one domestic program stands on the minus side (−4), although still above the foreign policy programs. There can be no question that the American people would rather see their government invest in social programs — and even in highways — before investing in defense and foreign military and economic assistance.

A rapid glance at Figure I-2 tells us that both economic and military aid have been the least-favored programs over the eight-year period of these surveys and that there has been little change in public preferences with respect to them over time.

FIGURE I-2 (The Public)
EXPAND, CUT BACK FEDERAL PROGRAMS 1974, 1978, 1982



Four years ago it looked as though both programs might be climbing slowly in public estimation, but that now appears to have been a temporary fluctuation. Aid to education, on the other hand, continues to enjoy the public's favor.

The Social Security program is new to our list so it lacks comparative data. Highway expenditures have increased in net support: in 1978 the gain was due mostly to a small increase in the proportion of those who would like to expand the program; in 1982 the gain owed more to a decrease in the percent saying "cut back." Welfare programs, which dropped sharply in popularity four years ago, have regained the ground they lost — a development that goes hand-in-hand with the contemporary concern about unemployment.

The change in net public support for defense spending is almost a mirror image of that for welfare and relief programs. In 1978 defense had turned around the net negative evaluation it had suffered since the Vietnam war; indeed, President Reagan came into office with a pledge to increase defense spending to make up for the years during which it had lost public favor. But by 1982 the figures of 1978 were reversed. In 1978, 34% wanted to expand defense spending and 24% wanted to cut it back (a net +10); in 1982, 24% wanted to expand it and 34% wanted to cut it back (a net −10). This survey suggests a number of causes for that volatility: concern about the state of the economy, which must include concern about the large budget deficits; growing concern about the threat of nuclear war; growing realization of the impact that defense spending was having on more favored social programs; and, of course, growing realization that by 1982 President Reagan had already expanded defense spending by a substantial amount.

II. Foreign Policy Goals: Perceptions and Performance

This survey shows the same kinds of ambivalence and apparent inconsistency at work among the American people that were revealed in prior surveys by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Elsewhere in this report there is evidence of the continuing priority given to domestic affairs, especially to the domestic economy, over foreign affairs. But we also find in this survey evidence that the American people have not lost their conviction that the world is a place both of danger and of opportunity and that both of these prospects require specific and continuing American involvement. While the level of these commitments is not as high as it once was, there has been little change over the past four years in the ingredients that make up the orientation of Americans to the world around them. Indeed, given the enormous pull of the nation's domestic economic problems, the stability in the perception of foreign policy problems and in the importance attached to specific foreign policy goals is remarkable and much more impressive than the changes that have taken place.

INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD AFFAIRS

One of these changes, and one of the elements of contradiction, is found in Table II-1. There we can see some evidence of a slow retreat on the part of the American people from their earlier postwar judgment that the national interest required active participation in world affairs as well as an increase in the proportion who are uncertain about the best course for the country to take.[1] While only a bare majority of the public now believes that such international activism is best for the country, it is significant that there has been no erosion of the convictions of the nation's leaders: 98% of the leadership sample are committed to the judgment that the U.S. should take an active part in world affairs. Education is a powerful determinant of the public's attitudes on this issue: 73% of the college educated, but only 38% of the grade-school educated, believe we should play an active role in the world.

1. It should be pointed out that other surveys cited in John M. Benson, "The Polls: U.S. Military Intervention," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 46, p. 593, show a greater stability since 1973, with approximately two-thirds of those *with opinions* favoring an active part in world affairs and one-third favoring staying out.

This apparent decline in the public's commitment to "internationalism" is reflected in specific attitudes toward a number of the issues raised in this survey, as we shall see below. But it is *not* reflected in the public's estimate of the role they believe the United States *should* play a decade from now: 71% of those who favor an active part in world affairs think we should then be playing a role "as world leader" at least as important as the one we now play while 72% of those who favor staying out of world affairs feel the same way! If those two questions have substantially the same meaning, they suggest an inconsistency in the public's attitudes; the psychological commitment to international participation is perhaps even stronger than the judgment that it might be in our national interest to disengage.

Further evidence pointing in this same direction is provided by the fact that very substantial minorities (between 25% and 45%) of those who believe we should have taken a *more active* role in each of six recent international events (see Table II-6) *also* believe that it would be better for the future of the country if we were to stay out of international affairs!

This inconsistency and ambivalence reflect not only the competing claims of domestic and foreign policy but also growing strains between the desire to remain powerful and important in the world and the costs and dangers attendant on that objective. These contradictions are evident throughout the survey and not least in the public's perceptions of the major foreign policy problems confronting the country and in the foreign policy goals they see as most important.

PERCEPTION OF FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS

Once again we asked our respondents to tell us what they thought were the two or three biggest foreign policy problems confronting the country today.[2] Table II-2 reports the results for the public and leadership samples for both 1982 and 1978.

TABLE II-1. Involvement in world affairs—The Public
*"Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs?"**

	Better if we take an active part		Better if we stay out		Not sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
1982	53%	98%	35%	1%	12%	1%
1978	59	97	29	1	12	2
1974	66	na	24	na	10	na
1956	71	na	25	na	4	na
1947	68	na	25	na	7	na

*1947 and 1956 surveys by NORC; 1974 by Louis Harris and Associates; 1978 and 1982 by Gallup Organization.

TABLE II-2. Major foreign policy problems—1982 and 1978

"What are the two or three biggest foreign policy problems facing the U.S. today?"

	Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978
Middle East	19%	20%	39%	47%
Reduce foreign aid	16	18	1	4
Relations with Soviet Union	15	13	53	46
Balance of trade	13	12	22	19
Arms race	13	7	14	16
[illegible] war	11	na	13	na
Stronger foreign policy, loss of respect	10	na	18	na
Stay out of other countries' affairs	8	11	1	2
[illegible]	8	9	17	13
[illegible]	5	9	2	7
Latin America	5	2	21	5
Third World	3	na	17	18
[illegible] defense	2	3	7	7
Dealing with communism	2	2	2	6
World economy	2	2	11	7
Western [illegible]	2	1	14	6
Changing relations with African countries	1	4	2	18
Cuba	1	3	*	3
Improving relations with China	1	3	6	17
Iran crisis	1	1	1	8
Decline of the dollar	*	6	—	7
Human rights	*	1	2	7
Panama Canal	*	1	*	1
Taiwan	*	*	—	6
Vietnam	*	1	*	1

*Indicates less than one-half of 1%

The overall impression from the public's responses is one of continuity — which is surprising considering the passage of time and the course of events. The four subjects attracting most attention in 1982 are the same as in 1978—and they are in the same rank order: the Middle East, reduction of foreign aid, relations with the Soviet Union, and the balance of trade. Significantly, however, these four were closely joined by a concern for the nuclear arms race, up from 7% to 13%, and the prospects for war, which get the few responses to be reported separately in 1978, but stands at 11% in 1982. If we combine these latter two into a single "problem," it becomes, at 24%, the most important problem from the public's perspective, and, at 27%, the third most important problem to the leaders.

Several of these leading problems require some explanation. The Middle East and relations with the Soviet Union require comment. They have been so dominant in the headlines continuously since 1979, dealing with one crisis after another, that it is unnecessary to do more than point out that the Iran crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Polish crisis, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the Soviet military buildup have all contributed to the high salience of these issues.

The leaders are more likely to see the Middle East, relations with the Soviet Union, the arms race, and loss of respect as important problems while those who believe it would be best if we stayed out of world affairs are more likely to see as important problems the reduction of foreign aid and (naturally) staying out of other countries' affairs.

The problems that have risen most significantly in the public's perception are very divergent. On the one hand, 24% of the public expressed concern about the arms race and nuclear war, up from 7% in 1978; but at the same time the proportion of those who are upset by foreign policy weakness and loss of respect doubled, up from 5% to 10%. Significantly, there is no ideological difference on these questions. Conservatives and liberals are troubled in equal measure by both problems.

Changes in the problems that preoccupy the leaders in our sample are more numerous, and the extent of the changes is more substantial. But one would expect both of these developments from that part of the population that pays close and often professional attention to foreign policy problems. The two issues at the top of the leaders' list are the same as in 1978, but their order has changed: relations with the Soviet Union has stepped ahead of the Middle East as the primary problem. Relations with the Soviet Union were perceived as a problem by only 12% of the leaders sampled in 1974; this increased to 46% in 1978 and 53% in 1982. That is as good a measure of the decline of detente as one is likely to find anywhere.

The overriding concern with the Soviet Union seems to affect (or perhaps reflect) the way the leaders look at the broader range of contemporary problems. Relations with China and Africa have declined substantially in importance, replaced by a concern with Latin America and Western Europe, both areas bedeviled by the extension of Soviet power as well as by the extension of American power.

The leaders also continue to be concerned with international economic problems. Like the general public, they are troubled by the decline in the competitive position of the American economy. But unlike the general public, they continue to be likely to mention problems in the Third World and they show heightened concern for the problems of the world economy.

for the future of American foreign policy, is the fact that — as Table II-2 so clearly shows—the foreign policy concerns of the public and its leaders are not the same. For the leaders, relations with the Soviet Union overshadow all other problems. For the public, a variety of problems are of concern, *including* the Soviet Union and the threat of war. Real or effective leadership will narrow the gulf, of course, although the *capacity* for leadership is itself a function of the size of the gap. But if the nation's leaders and the public at large are marching to somewhat different drummers, Table II-2 also suggests that that is not a new phenomenon.

FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

For the third time, in 1982, the Council survey of the public and its leaders explored the importance people attach to various foreign policy goals. Table II-3 displays the responses for 14 goals from the 2 most recent surveys. For the general public especially, the continuity in attachment to these goals is striking. There has been more movement among the goals of the leadership sample, but even among the leaders there are many instances of continuity over the four-year interval. It is worth noting, however, that for most of these goals, upward of one-third of those members of the public who regard them as "very important" *also* believe that it would be better for the future of the country if we stayed out of world affairs. Attachment to these goals, therefore, while important in a number of ways, cannot be taken automatically to signify a corresponding commitment to internationalism.

The items at both the top and bottom of the list in Table II-3 tell us a great deal about contemporary American orientation to the world. The top three goals on the list, those with the *stronger* attachment, involve essentially domestic values, affecting the state of the economy. The last four goals, those with the *weaker* attachment, involve values that are altruistic. There has been little change from 1978 to 1982, both in the strength of the orientation toward domestic goals and the weakness of the orientation toward altruistic international goals.

"Protecting jobs of American workers" has replaced the "value of the dollar" as the goal most valued by the public. Significantly, this chief foreign policy goal is the same domestic concern as the issue seen as the "biggest problem facing the country today." (See Chapter I, Table I-1) Otherwise, the rank order as well as the degree of attachment remains the same. But there was one addition to the list this year: we sought to ascertain the importance attached to the goal of "matching Soviet military power" since that is such a driving purpose of the Reagan administration. That goal was judged very important by 49% of the general public—8th on a list of 14 and on a par with "defending our allies' security" and "strengthening the United Nations" but considerably below protecting jobs, the value of the dollar, and energy supplies — all "inward-looking" goals. It is also 15 percentage points behind "worldwide arms control." The American people may share the president's concern with the "Soviet problem," but he apparently has not succeeded in getting them fully to share his security-policy priorities, and preferred ways of dealing with that problem. And as we shall point out below, even those who do believe it to be very important to match Soviet military power give strong support to policies of cooperation with the Soviet Union.

For fully half of the goals on the list there

TABLE II-3. Foreign policy goals for the United States—1982 and 1978

"I am going to read a list of possible goals that the United States might have. For each one, please say whether you think that should be a very important foreign policy goal, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all."

	Very Important				Somewhat Important				Not Important			
	Public		Leaders		Public		Leaders		Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978
1. Protecting jobs of American workers	77%	78%	43%	34%	17%	15%	46%	57%	3%	3%	10%	7%
2. Keeping up the value of the dollar	71	86	38	73	22	8	50	23	2	2	10	1
3. Securing adequate supplies of energy	70	78	72	89	23	19	27	11	3	2	1	1
4. Worldwide arms control	64	64	86	81	31	29	12	16	4	4	2	3
5. Containing communism	59	60	44	45	37	34	46	47	4	5	9	7
6. Combating world hunger	58	59	64	67	33	31	33	31	7	8	3	2
7. Defending our allies' security	50	50	82	77	39	35	16	21	9	13	1	1
8. Matching Soviet military power	49	*	52	*	34	*	40	*	12	*	7	*
9. Strengthening the United Nations	48	47	25	26	32	32	47	49	13	13	28	25
10. Protecting interests of American business abroad	44	45	25	26	43	40	66	64	9	9	9	9
11. Promoting and defending human rights in other countries	43	39	41	35	42	40	54	56	9	14	5	8
12. Helping to improve the standard of living in less-developed countries	35	35	55	64	50	47	44	33	11	12	1	3
13. Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	34	34	43	30	50	47	52	62	9	10	3	5
14. Helping to bring democratic forms of government to other nations	29	26	23	15	47	44	57	62	17	17	19	23

*Not asked

was no significant change in the "very important" judgments the leaders made in 1978. These were mainly the "ideological" goals: "containing communism," "combating world hunger," "strengthening the United Nations," "promoting human rights," and "protecting interests of American business abroad."

For the other goals, however, the leaders displayed greater sensitivity to the shifting importance of particular values in a changed foreign policy setting. "Protecting jobs of American workers" was judged very important by 43%, a rise of 9 percentage points, but "keeping up the value of the dollar" dropped by 35 percentage points to 38%. "Worldwide arms control" (86%) and "defending our allies' security" (82%) are at the top of the leaders' list, followed by "securing adequate supplies of energy," which contextually suggests a strategic interest in oil. The leaders judged "matching Soviet military power" to be very important in approximately the same proportion as the general public: 52%, 6th on the list of 14, just below "helping to improve the standard of living in less-developed countries." This ranking is particularly interesting because of the evidence in Table II-2 that the leaders are much more concerned than the general public with the problem posed by Soviet power. The foreign policy leaders, like the general public, apparently define America's security interests in terms other than simply keeping up with the Soviets weapon for weapon or even "containing communism," which was judged very important by only 44% of the leaders. The leaders attach higher priority to arms control and to defending our allies as means of dealing with this problem.

It is interesting to note, finally, that in 1982 as in 1978 the general public attached considerably more importance to "protecting the interests of American business abroad" than the leaders did. Presumably, those interests include selling more goods and thus protecting or creating jobs.

FOREIGN POLICY PERFORMANCE

Let us move now from aspiration to reality, from the judgment of goals in the abstract to evaluation of specific policy proposals and concrete policy performance.

Human rights policy has not succeeded in carving a secure and stable position in practical policy terms. The public still does not recognize human rights as an important foreign policy problem facing the country. Promoting and defending human rights in the abstract increased very slightly as a "very important" goal, from 39% in 1978 to 43% today. Of this minority who deem it very important, more than a third (36%) do *not* believe that we should take a more active role in opposing apartheid in South Africa. The leaders are more consistent on this issue: almost all of the 41% who now believe human rights to be a very important goal think we should be more active in opposing apartheid.

A different statistic reveals even more starkly the limited attachment of both the public and leaders to promoting human rights abroad and the extent to which human rights is subordinated to security considerations when these are made explicit. Only 28% of the public sample would appear to be very favorably disposed to human rights — those who believe it is a "very important" goal *and* who also believe that giving military aid lets dictatorships use their military power against their own people. Of this group of presumed "stalwarts," 62% nonetheless agree that the U.S. "may have to support some military dictators because they are friendly toward us and opposed to the communists." Only 32% of the leaders are found in this subset, and as many as 42% of these also agree that we may have to support some military dictators.

RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.S.R.

Where do the American people stand with respect to policy toward the Soviet Union? What is the practical significance of the foreign policy goals we have discussed in this section? Answer: there is considerable ambivalence in public opinion on the U.S.S.R.—helped along, no doubt, by the belief that the United States has lost its military superiority over that country. (See Table II-4) There is an active concern about the state of relations with the Soviet Union and the state of American and Western security running throughout this survey; but there is also a strong undercurrent of yearning for improvement in relations between the two countries.

The negative elements of American opinion toward the Soviet Union show up in a number of questions: when people were asked to rate countries on a "feeling thermometer," the Soviet Union was at the bottom, with a mean of 26 — lower even than Iran! Brezhnev's temperature was third from the bottom, frozen out only by Arafat and Khomeini. Twenty-six percent believe we should continue to build nuclear weapons regardless of what the Soviets do, and 49% believe we should stop only if the Soviet Union would agree to stop. Seventy-one percent of the public with opinions (80% of the leaders) believe we should maintain our commitment to NATO. And nearly 60% of the public and 80% of the leaders want to limit the sale of advanced computers that have either military or industrial applications to the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, both the public and the leadership group are in favor of reestablishing the conditions—or the benefits — of detente. (See Table II-5) The increased antipathy of the past four years has left its mark on many of these items, but there are still very strong majorities favoring the negotiation of arms control agreements between the two countries, resuming cultural and educational exchanges, and undertaking joint efforts to solve energy problems. And there is little support for prohibiting the exchange of scientists or embargoing the sale of grain to the Soviets. The public is divided on the question of an overall restriction on U.S.-Soviet trade; but the leaders, who showed themselves to be greatly concerned about relations with the Soviet Union, do not favor such restrictions.

With a prudent concern for their own security, the American people — public and leaders alike — want to resolve the "Soviet problem" by cooperating with the Soviet Union rather than pursuing confrontation. The depth of this preference for cooperative measures to reduce tensions is even *more* apparent among that half of the population that believes "matching

TABLE II-4. The military balance—1982

"At the present time, which nation do you feel is stronger in terms of military power, the United States or the Soviet Union–or do you think they are about equal militarily?"

	Public	Leaders
U.S. stronger	21%	20%
U.S.S.R. stronger	29	15
About equal	42	62
Don't know	8	3

TABLE II-5. Relationships with the Soviet Union—1982 and 1978

"Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States have been the subject of disagreement for some time. Please tell me if you favor or oppose the following types of relationships with the Soviet Union."

	% In Favor			
	Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978
Negotiating arms control agreements between the U. S. and the Soviet Union	77%	na	96%	na
Signing another arms agreement to limit some nuclear weapons on both sides	na	71	na	92
Signing an agreement to ban all nuclear weapons on both sides	na	62	na	61
Undertaking joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems	64	68	78	90
Limiting the sale of advanced U. S. computers to the Soviet Union	59	51	79	59
Restricting U.S.-Soviet trade	47	39	28	17
Prohibiting the exchange of scientists between the U.S. and the Soviet Union	35	34	18	11
Resuming cultural and educational exchanges between the U.S. and the Soviets	70	na	94	na
Forbidding grain sales to the Soviet Union	28	na	16	na

Finally, what kind of self-image has American foreign policy engendered in the American people? Once again the answer is ambivalent. Two-thirds continue to believe, as they did four and eight years ago, that the U.S. has been a force for good in the world since World War II. At the same time, 72% continues to agree with the statement that "the Vietnam war was more than a mistake — it was fundamentally wrong and immoral."

In 1978, 56% of the public and 47% of the leaders thought that the U.S. was less respected in the world than ten years earlier. That sense of esteem deteriorated still further by 1982: 65% of the public and 50% of the leaders now believe that we are less respected than we were a decade ago. In every one of the events listed in Table II-6, those who thought we should have taken a *less* active role are at the same time more likely than others to believe that our respect has declined over the past decade. Since our role in some of these events was minimal to begin with, this is a counter-intuitive finding and additionally suggests inconsistent outlooks in foreign policy.

Soviet military power" is a very important goal: 84% of this group favors negotiating arms control agreements with the Soviets; 75% favors a resumption of educational and cultural exchanges; and 70% favors joint efforts to solve energy problems.

RATING OUR GOVERNMENT

Respondents also were asked to rate the way the government handled a number of international situations in recent years. The results are given in Table II-6. The public shows some capacity to discriminate among these issues, being most negative about the handling of the Iranian hostage crisis, where our involvement was direct and costly, and most positive about the handling of the Falklands war, where our role was limited to an attempt at mediation. These two cases attracted the most attention, as is evident by the relatively few who answered "don't know." On the whole, however, there is little enthusiasm for American conduct on any of these issues. Except for the Falklands war, a majority rated the government's *handling* of all of them as, at best, only fair. In all except the Iranian case, the dominant judgment about the extent of *American activity* was that it was "just about right." Only in the Iranian case did a majority think that we should have taken a *more* active role. El Salvador drew the largest proportion (25%) of those who believed we should have taken a *less* active role.

TABLE II-6. The public's response to the handling of recent foreign policy events–1982

"Here is a list of some important events that have happened to the world during the past few years. How would you rate the way the U.S. government handled each of these situations? Would you say our response was excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

"Do you think the U.S. should have taken a more active role, less active role, or was our role just about right?"

	Rating of Handling of Events					Desired U.S. Role			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	More	Less	About Right	Don't Know
1. The seizure of U.S. hostages in Iran	7%	27%	25%	37%	4%	56%	4%	35%	5%
2. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan	2	18	30	30	20	29	10	38	23
3. The declaration of martial law in Poland	2	22	33	21	22	24	9	45	22
4. The fighting between the government and the rebels in El Salvador	1	17	26	31	25	14	25	34	27
5. The war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands	14	40	22	12	12	11	14	62	13
6. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon	4	25	29	24	18	21	15	47	16

III. Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

VITAL INTERESTS

In 1982, as in 1978, the public saw the U.S. as having vital interests (defined as "important to the U.S. for political, economic, or security reasons") in a wide variety of countries throughout the world. (See Table III-1 and Figure III-1) That our neighbors Canada and Mexico were near the top of the list is not surprising. At the very top of the list was Japan, a distant country with which the United States has vital political, economic, and security ties. Great Britain and West Germany were the two European countries seen as most important to American interests. Both were rated noticeably higher than France, our oldest ally, and Italy. Indeed, Italy was one of only 3 countries out of 22

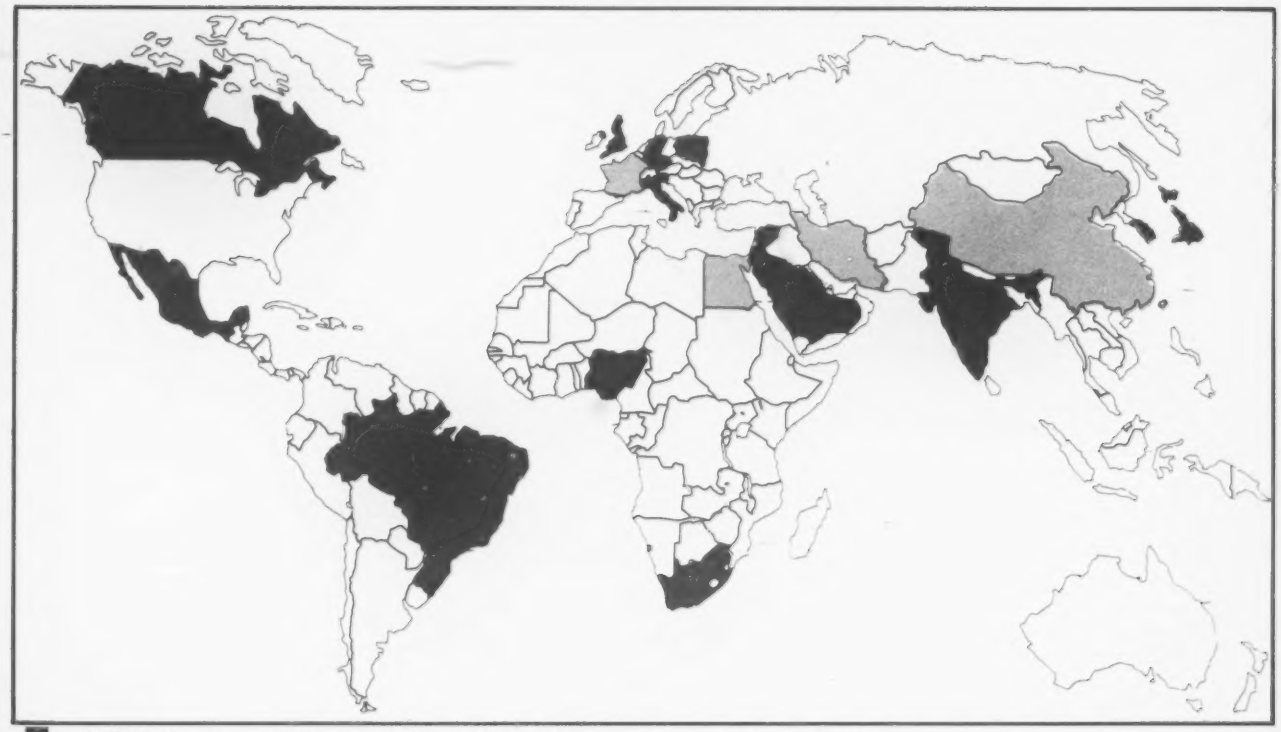
TABLE III-1. Perceptions of U.S. vital interests—1982

"Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic or security reasons. I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me whether you feel the U.S. does or does not have a vital interest in that country."

	U.S. Has Vital Interest					
	Does		Does Not		Don't Know	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Japan	82%	97%	9%	2%	9%	1%
Canada	82	95	10	4	8	1
Great Britain	80	97	11	2	9	1
Saudi Arabia	77	93	10	6	13	1
West Germany	76	98	13	1	11	1
Israel	75	92	15	8	10	*
Mexico	74	98	16	1	10	1
Egypt	66	90	19	9	15	1
People's Republic of China	64	87	19	12	17	1
France	58	84	25	15	17	1
Lebanon	55	74	27	23	18	3
Iran	51	60	36	38	13	2
Taiwan	51	44	29	54	20	2
Brazil	45	80	32	18	23	2
South Korea	43	66	36	31	21	3
Poland	43	47	38	50	19	3
Jordan	41	67	32	31	27	2
South Africa	38	54	37	43	25	3
Syria	36	46	33	52	31	2
Italy	35	79	45	20	20	1
Nigeria	32	53	35	44	33	3
India	30	57	44	40	26	3

*Less than one-half of 1%.

FIGURE III-1
PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. Vital Interests—1982 (The Public)



—OVER 70% Japan Canada Great Britain Saudi Arabia West Germany Israel Mexico
—50-70% Egypt People's Republic of China France Lebanon Iran Taiwan
—36-50% Brazil S. Korea Poland Jordan S. Africa Syria
—36% AND LESS Italy Nigeria India

tested where more people said we did not have a vital interest than said we did. (The others were Nigeria and India.)

Two Middle Eastern countries were high on the list—Saudi Arabia and Israel. The public sees these two antagonists as about equal in importance for the United States, Israel presumably for political reasons, Saudi Arabia for economic reasons, and both for reasons of military security. Egypt, with which our ties are weaker and more recent, ranks a bit lower in importance. Lebanon also was perceived, by a two-to-one margin, as a country where the U.S. has a vital interest, a perception undoubtedly encouraged by the presence of U.S. troops in that country to maintain peace among Israel, the PLO, and Lebanese factions. Jordan and Syria came out significantly lower on the list.

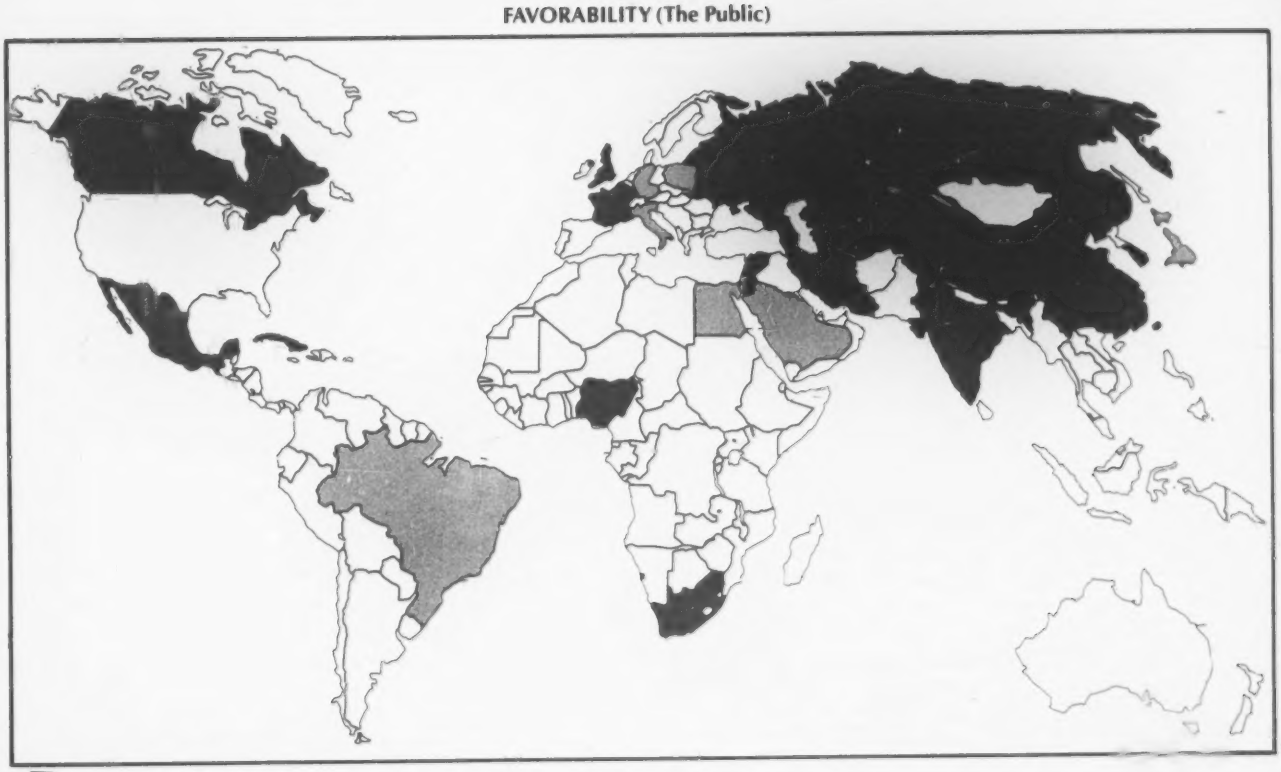
The public continues to see a strong U.S. interest in the People's Republic of China, although it has declined a bit over the past four years. Otherwise, Third World countries ranked fairly low — including India, the second largest country in the world. A bare majority of Americans continue to feel that we have a vital interest in Iran, although that figure has dropped 16 points since the 1978 survey. The Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis, which took place during the intervening period, diminished but did not destroy Americans' sense of interest in Iran. And despite the downgrading of U.S. diplomatic ties with Taiwan, a majority virtually unchanged since 1978 continues to feel that we have a vital interest in that country.

Better-educated and more internationalist-minded Americans are more likely to see vital U.S. interests in almost all other countries. Thus, among respondents who were rated "high" in attentiveness to foreign news, 37% saw the U.S. as having vital interests in at least half of the countries tested. This was true of 24% of those rated "average" in attentiveness to foreign news and only 13% of those rated "low" in foreign news interest. It was not surprising, therefore, that a larger proportion of the leadership sample than of the public sample saw the U.S. as having a vital interest in each country.

The one exception was Taiwan; 51% of the public, but only 44% of opinion leaders, thought the U.S. has a vital interest in that country. This is a case where the "cue" that the U.S. has officially renounced interest in Taiwan in favor of the People's Republic of China has been picked up more readily by the elite than by the mass public. In fact, Taiwan is at the bottom of the list among opinion leaders, along with Poland and Syria, the other two countries where a majority of opinion leaders does not see a vital U.S. interest. The low priority given to Poland is striking, given the Reagan administration's attention to the Polish crisis.

A mood of security-consciousness can be seen in the list of countries where U.S. interest is perceived to have increased over the past four years. They include our border countries—Canada (13% increase since 1978) and Mexico (+14% percent); our principal European and Asian allies—Britain (+14%), West Germany (+7%), Japan (+4%), and France (+4%); another Western Hemisphere country, Brazil (+7%); and a communist country threatened by Soviet intervention, Poland (+15%). On the other hand, the public's

FIGURE III-2
FAVORABILITY (The Public)



—60° AND WARMER Canada Great Britain France Mexico
—50-60° West Germany Israel Italy Brazil Japan Poland Egypt Saudi Arabia
—40-50° Taiwan India People's Republic of China Jordan Lebanon S. Africa S. Korea Nigeria Syria
—UNDER 30° Iran Cuba Soviet Union

interest in South Africa has dropped sharply since 1978 (25% fewer now say the U.S. has a vital interest there), along with long-term ally South Korea (−18%), ally-turned-enemy Iran (−16%), Third World countries Nigeria, Egypt, and India (losses of 10, 9, and 7 points, respectively), and the People's Republic of China (−6%). These trends reflect a heightened sense of tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union since 1978 and a decline of concern about countries peripheral to that conflict.

FAVORABILITY TOWARD COUNTRIES

Respondents in the public sample were asked, as in 1978, to indicate their degree of "favorability" toward each in a list of 24 countries on a thermometer scale, ranging between 0° (very cold, or unfavorable) and 100° (very warm, or favorable). A thermometer rating of 50° was designated as neutral. (See Table III-2 and Figure III-2)

As in 1978, Western countries tended to come out high in favorability, with Canada, Britain, and France at the top of the list. It should be noted that the public has quite favorable feelings toward France and Italy (60° and 55°, respectively) even though the previous question showed these two countries rated relatively low in terms of vital U.S. interests. On the other hand, Japan, which was at the top of the list when it came to vital interests, received a relatively lower favorability rating (53°). Apparently, the public is able to distinguish our interests from our affective ties.

Generally, Third World countries fell in the middle, or neutral, range in terms of favorability, with Israel (55°) and two Latin American countries, Mexico (60°) and Brazil (54°), somewhat higher than the others. The one Third World country that elicited a very negative response was, not surprisingly, Iran. Iran's favorability rating fell by no less than 22° in four years, from 50° in 1978 to 28° in 1982. The public does show distinctively different attitudes toward different communist countries. Poland, the East European country most actively resistant to Soviet domination, won a slightly favorable rating, 52°. The People's Republic of China, at 47°, was regarded in only a barely unfavorable light. Both countries improved their favorability ratings, by 2° and 3°, respectively, since 1978. The Soviet Union and its close ally, Cuba, came out at the very bottom of the list, and, in fact, feelings about both countries have grown noticeably more negative since 1978 (a slippage of 5° for Cuba and 8° for the Soviet Union).

Most other countries that were tested in 1978 showed little change in their 1982 ratings. The data do, however, point to an interesting shift of sentiment on the Middle East: public favorability toward Israel slipped by 6°, from 61° in 1978 to 55° in 1982, just after the invasion of Lebanon and the massacres at the PLO refugee camps in that country. Public opinion toward Saudi Arabia, on the other hand,

TABLE III-2. Thermometer ratings for countries—The Public

"Next I'd like you to rate the same countries on this feeling thermometer. If you feel neutral toward a country, give it a temperature of 50 degrees. If you have a warm feeling toward a country, give it a temperature higher than 50 degrees. If you have a cool feeling toward a country, give it a temperature lower than 50 degrees."

	Mean Temperature
Canada	74°
Great Britain	68°
France	60°
Mexico	60°
West Germany	59°
Israel	55°
Italy	55°
Brazil	54°
Japan	53°
Poland	52°
Egypt	52°
Saudi Arabia	52°
Taiwan	49°
India	48°
People's Republic of China	47°
Jordan	47°
Lebanon	46°
South Africa	45°
South Korea	44°
Nigeria	44°
Syria	42°
Iran	28°
Cuba	27°
Soviet Union	26°

improved, from a slightly unfavorable 48° in 1978 to a slightly favorable 52° in 1982. Feelings about Egypt were virtually unchanged while Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria were not tested in 1978.

FAVORABILITY TOWARD WORLD LEADERS

The public respondents also were asked to give thermometer ratings of various international figures. (See Table III-3) Pope John Paul II topped the list with a resoundingly favorable 70° rating. Interestingly, the next top-ranked world leader was British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who, at 61°, bested all of the American public figures tested, including President Reagan. Prime Minister Thatcher's victory in the Falkland Islands may have won her many admirers in the United States as well as in her own country. All of the American public figures save one fell into the moderately favorable range of popularity, 53° to 55°, as did Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

TABLE III-3. THERMOMETER RATINGS FOR PERSONALITIES—The Public

"Now I would like you to rate some American and foreign leaders on this thermometer scale. What temperature would you give to:"

	Temperature (0°–100°)	(Percent Familiar)
Pope John Paul II	70°	96%
British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	61°	91
Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau	55°	82
Secretary of State George Shultz	55°	72
President Ronald Reagan	54°	99
Former President Jimmy Carter	54°	99
Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger	54°	95
U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick	54°	66
Senator Edward Kennedy	53°	97
French President François Mitterrand	49°	66
Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel	45°	88
Former President Richard Nixon	38°	97
Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev	31°	87
PLO leader Yassir Arafat	28°	83
The Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran	11°	91

Both President Reagan and former President Carter ended up with exactly the same favorability rating, 54°. In Reagan's case, however, the data reveal considerable polarization: 23% of the public gave the president a very unfavorable rating (0° to 30°) while 27% gave him a very favorable rating (76° to 100°). At 54°, President Reagan's rating was virtually unchanged from 1978 (55°)—which is surprising because he was elected president in the intervening period. When Jimmy Carter was tested in 1978, at the same point in his administration, his rating was a significantly higher 65°. The only American figure to receive an unfavorable rating was former President Richard Nixon — 38°, which was marginally better than the rating of Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev (31°), who was still in office during the interviewing period.

The Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran came out at the bottom of the list, at 11°. PLO leader Yassir Arafat finished second lowest (28°), which does not indicate any great surge of sympathy from the American people as a result of events in Lebanon. However, feelings toward Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin did decline substantially. Begin was regarded quite favorably at 57° in 1978; in 1982 his rating had slipped into the unfavorable range, 45°, with one-quarter of the public expressing a strongly unfavorable attitude compared to only 7% strongly favorable. Notably, Menachem Begin's favorability rating, at 45°, was fully 10° lower than the favorability rating for Israel.

While Henry Kissinger's favorability rating fell from 60° in 1978 to 54° in 1982, it is still moderately favorable and, in fact, equal to the ratings of Reagan and Carter, an impressive record for a man who has been out of office for six years. The results of the 1980 election also can be seen in the slippage of the two Democratic contenders in that race. The popularity ratings of both Jimmy Carter and Edward M. Kennedy fell by 11° between 1978 and 1982.

TABLE III-4. Level of threat to U.S. created by communist electoral victories—1982

"I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me how much of a threat it would be to the U.S. if the communists came to power."

	Great Threat		Somewhat of a Threat		Not Very Much		No Threat		Don't Know	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Mexico	61%	70%	19%	24%	8%	4%	4%	1%	8%	1%
Saudi Arabia	49	61	31	32	8	4	3	2	9	1
France	31	37	38	44	17	15	5	3	9	1
Iran	24	17	35	50	22	20	10	12	9	1
El Salvador	21	10	43	42	21	36	5	11	10	1
Taiwan	17	6	36	25	23	33	11	35	13	1

THREAT OF COMMUNISM

The American public treats the communist threat in different countries with varying degrees of seriousness. One question asked "if the Communist Party came to power through peaceful elections" in each of six countries, would that represent "a great threat," "somewhat of a threat," "not very much of a threat," or "no threat at all" to the United States. (See Table III-4) The six countries tested in 1982 were El Salvador, France, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Iran, and Taiwan.

A majority of the public does regard a communist takeover, even if by peaceful democratic means, as at least "somewhat of a threat" in every one of these countries. But only in the case of Mexico does a majority (61%) say that a communist victory would be "a great threat to the U.S." The figure drops to 49% in the case of Saudi Arabia and only 31% for France (where there is now communist participation in the government). In each of these three cases the leaders were more likely to see a communist government as "a great threat to U.S. interests" (70% in the case of Mexico, 61% in the case of Saudi Arabia, and 37%—still a relatively low figure—in the case of France). For both the leaders and the public, the percentages holding the view that communist rule in Mexico and France constituted "a great threat" to the U.S. increased between 1978 and 1982 (Saudi Arabia was not tested in 1978). The increases for France were 5% in the mass public sample and 4% in the elite sample. In the case of Mexico, the increases in concern over communism were somewhat greater—8% in the public sample and 19% in the leaders sample.

The public tended to see communist takeovers of Iran, El Salvador, and Taiwan as substantially less serious. The prevailing view was that communist victories in these three countries would represent "somewhat of a threat" to the U.S. In the case of Iran, which was tested in 1978, the view of communism as a great threat declined by 11 points in the mass public and 35 points among the leaders. However, these three countries reversed the pattern reported for Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and France. The public was more likely than the leaders to see communist takeovers in Iran, El Salvador, and Taiwan as threatening to the United States.

Twenty-six percent of the public, but 47% of the leaders, saw "not very much of a threat" or "no threat at all" in a communist victory—"through peaceful elections"—in El Salvador. Thirty-four percent of the public and a substantial 68% of the leaders were similarly unconcerned about a communist takeover of Taiwan. The leaders, it appears, find it easier than the public to differentiate among countries where communist governments would or would not threaten U.S. interests. The leaders' group view is that communism does threaten the U.S. greatly in Mexico and Saudi Arabia; it does so only "somewhat" in France and Iran; and it is not much of a threat in El Salvador and Taiwan, two countries where U.S. administrations portrayed a "great threat" to U.S. interests and have made heavy military commitments.

SUPPORT FOR NATO

Our oldest regional security alliance is, of course, NATO. The data show continuing public support for that military commitment. (See Table III-5) In 1982, as in 1974 and 1978, a majority of the American public favored keeping our commitment to NATO as it is now. In 1978 support for NATO increased slightly over 1974, and in 1982 that higher level of support was essentially maintained. Fifty-eight percent of the public favor keeping the same level and 9% support increasing that commitment—both figures exactly the same as in 1978. Fifteen percent feel that the U.S. should decrease its commitment to NATO, compared with 13% who felt that way four years ago, an insignificant change.

The 1982 survey does show some shift in the sentiments of opinion leaders on the NATO issue, however. The proportion who want to increase our NATO commitment fell from 21% among opinion leaders in 1978 to 7% in 1982. In 1978, 21% of the leaders wanted to increase our NATO commitment and 12% wanted to decrease it. In 1982 the margin had shifted to 12% for a decrease and 7% for an increase. The position that gained support among opinion leaders—no less than 14 points—was to keep our NATO commitment about the same as it is now. The latter view, at 79%, now represents a strong consensus among opinion leaders.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH CUBA

Other evidence of high level of tolerance in public opinion comes in the case of Cuba. Despite declining favorability toward Cuba and the Soviet Union, there is substantial public support for "the U.S. entering into negotiations with Cuba, looking toward reestablishing diplomatic and economic relations and exchanging ambassadors." The public favors such a proposal 48% to 37%, and opinion leaders favor it by a resounding 81% to 18%. Indeed, there is almost no difference between self-described liberals, moderates, and conservatives on this issue. An effort to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba is favored 50-37% among liberals, 50-35% among moderates, and 49-42% among conservatives. Such a proposal was supported by 54 of the 63 business leaders interviewed, 27 of the 28 labor leaders, and 28 of the 53 Congressional leaders; 8 of the 11 administration figures interviewed opposed the idea, however (though none of them strongly).

How did respondents feel the U.S. should deal with Cuban subversion in Central America? The prevailing view among both the public and the leaders (roughly 4 in 10 of each group) was that the U.S. should "negotiate with Cuba and try to get an agreement to stop the aid" if

the U.S. found clear evidence that Cuba was sending military supplies to rebels in Central America. Such a solution, of course, implies some form of contact between the two countries that does not now exist. The second most popular solution (26% of the public, 39% of the leaders) was to take strong diplomatic action against Cuba. There was very little support in either sample for doing nothing or for taking military action against Cuba, the two extreme alternatives. In the case of Cuba, as with the Soviet Union, the data reveal two basic sentiments: increased distrust since 1978 but, at the same time, a willingness to take positive action to improve relations and decrease the risk of war.

SECRET ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Nor is the public particularly supportive of CIA subversion. The poll asked, "In general, do you feel the CIA should or should not work secretly inside other countries to try to weaken or overthrow governments unfriendly to the U.S.?" Opinion leaders opposed such activity 58-35% while the public supported it by a narrow margin, 43-37%. Interestingly, respondents who were more attentive to foreign news and more internationalist-minded tended to be divided over the issue of CIA subversion. But those who paid little attention to foreign news were 38% to 31% percent favorable, and those who paid a great deal of attention were 50% to 39% favorable.

The same pattern held true when people were asked whether the CIA should be placed under greater restraint. Twenty-two percent of those low in attentiveness and 27% of those high in attentiveness favored greater restraint. But 10% of those low in attentiveness and 22% of those high in attentiveness favored fewer restrictions on CIA activities. Overall, 43% of the public felt that curbs on CIA activities should remain about the same as they are now; 25% wanted greater restraints, and just 15% wanted fewer. Here, too, the public seems inclined in a different direction than the Reagan administration. These figures are almost unchanged from 1978. At the elite level, the balance of sentiment is about the same and, again, shows little change since 1978. The general feeling is that CIA activities are under about the right level of restraint, with slightly more support for greater rather than fewer restrictions.

SENTIMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

The evidence reported earlier indicated some slippage in public favorability toward Israel and a marked drop in favorability toward Prime Minister Menachem Begin since 1978. There is reason to believe that this shift was related to the public's reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during the summer of 1982. The survey asked people how they felt about "Israel's recent actions in Lebanon." The public disapproved of these actions 55% to 21% while the leaders' disapproval was even stronger, 68% to 27%.

Other Gallup surveys confirm this negative public assessment of Israeli policies In August 1982 the public endorsed the view, by a strong 64-26% margin, that "the U.S. should require that all weapons sent by the U.S. to Israel should be used only for defensive purposes" instead of "in any way they feel is necessary." The proportion of the American public favoring the creation of "a separate, independent Palestinian nation" grew from 29% in October 1977 to 41% in July 1982. Indeed, the 1982 figures show an almost two-to-one margin (41% to 21%) in support of a Palestinian state. In our November poll the public supported President Reagan's Middle East peace plan by over two-to-one (48% to 22%). Finally, one-third of the public thought that U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel should be decreased (17%) or stopped altogether (16%), compared to only 9% who thought that such aid should be increased. Among opinion leaders, the ratio was even more negative — 25% for decreasing or stopping military aid to Israel and only 5% for increasing such aid.

Have Americans' sympathies in the Arab-Israeli conflict changed as a result of disapproval of Israeli policies? In the 1982 survey 48% of the public said they sympathized more with Israel, and 17% said they sympathized more with the Arab nations in the Middle East situation — still a strong margin of support for Israel. In 1978 the figures were somewhat smaller on both sides (41% for Israel, 13% for the Arabs). However, the 1978 survey asked the sympathy question only among the 87% of the sample who said they had heard or read about the situation in the Middle East while in 1982 the question was asked of everyone. A close inspection of the 1982 data reveals that as attentiveness to foreign news increases, so does sympathy for *both* Israel and the Arabs: those low in attention favored Israel over the Arabs by 40-14% while those high in attention favored Israel by 54-24%. Thus, a screen for attentiveness very likely would have produced slightly greater sympathy for both sides. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that sympathy for both Israel and the Arabs increased between 1978 and 1982.

The sympathy question was asked in several polls during the intervening time period. These polls enable us to pinpoint the shifts in public sentiment more precisely. They show that sympathy for Israel was about 40% in late 1978 and early 1979. It rose slightly, to 44%, in mid-1981. Several polls taken between January and June 1982 — before the invasion of Lebanon — show an increase in sympathy for

TABLE III-5. Attitude toward NATO

"Some people feel that NATO, the military organization of Western Europe and the United States, has outlived its usefulness and that the United States should withdraw militarily from NATO. Others say that NATO has discouraged the Russians from trying a military takeover in Western Europe. Do you feel we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment but still remain in NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely?"

	1974		1978		1982	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Increase commitment	4%	na	9%	21%	9%	7%
Keep commitment what it is	50	na	58	65	58	79
Decrease commitment	13	na	9	12	11	12
Withdraw entirely	7	na	4	1	4	1
Not sure	26	na	20	1	18	1

Israel to between 49% and 52%. Sympathy dropped after the invasion to 41% in July 1982 and to an all-time low of 32% in September, just after the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila camps. This sharp decline appears to have been temporary, however. Our November poll shows sympathy for Israel back up to 48%, or about where it was just before the events in Lebanon.

The stronger effect appears to be on sympathy for the Arabs. Gallup polls show sympathy for the Arabs rising from 6-8% in the mid-1970s to 10-14% after President Anwar Sadat's peace mission to Jerusalem in November 1977. Arab support remained in this range through early 1982. Gallup's September 1982 poll, taken in the aftermath of the massacres, reveals a sudden upswing in sympathy for the Arabs, to 28%. By November, however, that sentiment had fallen to 17% —lower than in the immediate aftermath of the events in Beirut but still noticeably higher than had been the case before June 1982.

It appears that sympathy for Israel rose prior to the invasion of Lebanon while sympathy for the Arabs increased after, and probably as a result of, those events. It should be stressed that the balance of public sympathy is still strongly pro-Israel. By almost a three-to-one margin, Americans favor Israel over the Arabs. Prime Minister Menachem Begin's popularity rating, while lower than it was four years ago, is still substantially higher than PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat's. On the other hand, Begin as an individual is much less favorably regarded than Israel as a country. Overall, there is now a greater intensity of feeling on both sides of the Middle East issue.

One might expect opinion leaders' sentiments to have changed quite sharply as a result of the dramatic 1982 events in the Middle East since they are considerably more attentive to such issues. The fact is, however, that the sympathies of opinion leaders hardly changed at all between 1978 and 1982. In 1978 the leadership sample sympathized with Israel over the Arabs by 47% to 21%. In 1982 the margin of sympathy for Israel was slightly greater, 51% to 19%, but not different enough to indicate a significant shift in a sample this small.

A separate question asked respondents whether they sympathized with Israel or "the Palestinians." The 1978 results showed almost exactly the same public response to the Israel-Palestinian choice as to the Israel-Arab choice. In 1982, however, responses to the two questions differed. While the public sympathized with Israel over "the Arabs" by 48% to 17%, they supported Israel over "the Palestinians" by a lesser margin, 40% to 17%. Opinion leaders were even more sensitive to the difference in terminology. Their support for Israel over "the Arabs" (51-19%) dropped to 42-26% for Israel over "the Palestinians." It appears that the net result of the Lebanon episode in terms of American public opinion was to generate a modest increase in sympathy for the Palestinian and Arab causes—but without doing any substantial damage to public support for Israel.

IV. U.S. Economic Involvement

At a time of continuing deep recession in the U.S. economy, most Americans viewed foreign economic policy through lenses of self-interest. At the end of 1982 they were especially concerned about the impact of foreign policy on U.S. unemployment, the budget, and energy supplies. Many felt humanitarian concerns about world poverty, but few were willing to spend much money on economic aid. Most Americans were also very skeptical about military aid or even arms sales. Foreign policy leaders, on the other hand, were much more strongly committed to free trade and economic aid for developing countries, and they were somewhat more favorable toward military aid.

FOCUS ON THE U.S. ECONOMY

As indicated earlier, most Americans saw the domestic economy — and especially unemployment — as the biggest problems facing the country. But this did not mean foreign policy was irrelevant. Quite the contrary; once again, as in our past surveys, most Americans perceived the world as highly interdependent and saw our economy as strongly affected by foreign policy.

When asked about a series of foreign-domestic connections, most Americans (72%) saw foreign policy as having a major impact on the U.S. economy generally and especially on gasoline prices (81%), the value of the dollar abroad (72%), and unemployment at home (66%). In line with changing circumstances since 1978, the assessment of impact on the value of the dollar was down by 10% and impact on unemployment was up sharply by 15%. It is especially notable that the public increasingly sees a strong link between foreign policy and domestic unemployment — a link that, presumably, works through export markets for American goods and foreign competition for the U.S. market. (See Table IV-1)

Quite naturally, therefore, most people define their main foreign policy objectives in terms of these foreign-domestic connections. Indeed, protecting jobs of American workers, keeping up the value of the dollar, and securing adequate supplies of energy were seen as very important goals of foreign policy by even more Americans than cited the other leading goals: containing communism or worldwide arms control. (See Table II-3 in Chapter II)

Concern about energy supplies remained high. Saudi Arabia, presumably because of its abundant oil reserves, was perceived as one of the top four or five countries of vital interest to the U.S., along with Great Britain and West Germany. Many Americans (49%) thought it would be a "great" threat to the U.S. if communists came to power in Saudi Arabia through peaceful elections — many more than felt that way about France (31%) or El Salvador (21%). And despite a strong distaste for military involvement, a substantial 39% of the public favored the use of U.S. troops if "the Arabs cut off all oil shipments to the U.S.," a situation considered next in seriousness, among possibilities listed, to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe or Japan. One-quarter of the public would even send troops in the event of an invasion of Saudi Arabia by Iran.

The public's focus on the U.S. economy was evident also, as discussed below, in support of protectionist measures and in a general unwillingness to spend money on economic or military aid.

This overriding preoccupation with the domestic economic implications of foreign policy was not fully shared, however, by the foreign policy leaders surveyed. To be sure, most of the leaders (53%: less than the public's 64% but up sharply from 25% in 1978) saw unemployment and recession as among the biggest problems facing the country, and they agreed (78%) that foreign policy has a major impact on the economy at home. But they did not make the same connections with specific policies. Considerably fewer leaders than members of the general public saw foreign policy as having a great impact on food prices (38% of leaders versus 60% of the public), unemployment (48% versus 66%), or even the value of the dollar (60% versus 72%) and gasoline prices (61% versus 81%). Labor leaders overwhelmingly (79%) perceived a major impact on unemployment; businessmen did not (41%). The leaders lowered their estimate of impacts on the dollar and

TABLE IV-1. Impact of foreign policy on the U.S. economy

"How important an impact do you think U.S. foreign policy has on the following: a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all?"

	1974	1978		1982		Change in % points 1978-1982	
	Public*	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Our overall economy at home							
Major impact	76%	72%	83%	72%	78%	0	−5
Gasoline prices at home							
Major impact	87	85	77	81	61	−4	−16
The value of the dollar abroad							
Major impact	78	82	76	72	60	−10	−16
Unemployment at home							
Major impact	60	51	41	66	48	+15	+7
Food prices at home							
Major impact	76	64	39	60	38	−4	−1

*No leaders data for 1974

gasoline prices even more than the public did (by 16%), in line with changing realities since 1978. (See Table IV-1)

Nor did the leaders accord domestic economic factors so much importance in their policy preferences. They differed markedly from the public on the goals of foreign policy, emphasizing arms control (86%) and our allies' security (82%) most highly; they stressed combating world hunger (64%) and improving the living standards of less developed countries (55%) much more than the public did. These greater concerns with worldwide security and economic development reflect the leaders' stronger commitment to internationalism generally.

The foreign policy leaders put considerably less emphasis on the domestically-oriented, self-interested aims of keeping up the value of the dollar (38% — down a striking 35% since 1978) and protecting American jobs (43% — up 9%, however, since 1978). They did agree on the importance of securing energy supplies (72% — down 16% from the crisis atmosphere of 1978). (See Table II-3) The leaders agreed as well on Saudi Arabia being of vital interest to the U.S. (93%) and on the threat of a communist government there (61%), but they were a bit less willing to contemplate use of U.S. troops in the event of an oil cutoff (36%).

As we will see, the leaders followed up on their disagreements with the public over priorities with much more willingness to spend money on aid and much less interest in trade protectionism than was expressed by the public.

Foreign policy leaders, of course, are not all alike. The businessmen in our sample, for example, differed markedly from the labor leaders in terms of foreign policy goals. The labor officials were much more likely than businessmen to cite as very important the altruistic goals of promoting human rights in other countries (68% of labor leaders versus 14% of businessmen); combating world hunger (86% versus 46%); bringing democracy to other countries (39% versus 10%); protecting weaker nations against aggression (64% versus 37%); and helping to improve the standard of living in less developed nations (64% versus 41%). Labor leaders also much more often emphasized the self-interested goal of protecting the jobs of American workers (89% versus 40%). Businessmen, on the other hand, more often cited as very important the goals of matching Soviet military strength (68% versus 43%) and promoting the interests of American business abroad (38% versus 21%).

TAR[illegible]ND TRADE

Fo[illegible] policy leaders expressed very strong support for free trade, long a keystone of internationalist attitudes. Fully 67% (down a bit, to be sure, from the 75% of 1978) favored all countries' eliminating their tariffs and other restrictions on imported goods, with only 28% calling tariffs necessary. (See Table IV-2) In our leadership sample businessmen endorsed eliminating tariffs by an especially large proportion, 81%, whereas labor leaders were the most protectionist, with only 21% opposing tariffs.

Among the general public, sentiment was just the reverse of the leaders': 57% thought tariffs necessary and only 22% favored eliminating them. About the same level of public support for tariffs was found by the Council in 1978 and indeed by other surveys throughout the middle and late 1970s. No doubt, a major reason for the public's advocacy of tariffs was worry about foreign competition and a belief that protectionism could preserve American jobs. Curiously, however, low-income Americans — presumably those most concerned about jobs — were *least* supportive of tariffs, perhaps because of apprehension that tariffs raise the prices of consumer goods.

In any case, there was a very large gap between leaders and public on the question of eliminating tariffs: a gap of 45 percentage points. This is one of many such gaps we have found, and one of the largest.

At the same time, the public did not always favor restrictions on trade for *political* or strategic reasons. Only 15%, for example, supported President Reagan's economic sanctions (subsequently abandoned) on allies who were helping the Soviets build a natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. Similarly, only 28% favored an embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union; 57% were opposed. Substantially more of the public favored unspecified restrictions on U.S.-Soviet trade, however (47%, up from 39% in 1978), as well as restrictions on the sale of advanced U.S. computers (59%, up from 51%). The foreign policy leaders overwhelmingly opposed a grain embargo (81%) or restricting Soviet trade generally (69%), though they did favor limiting the sale of computers (79%, up sharply from 59% in 1978). On this point the Reagan administration appears to have made some headway with both leaders and public.

ECONOMIC AID

On questions of economic aid the public is much less supportive than foreign policy leaders. We found large differences in their views, comparable to the gap on tariff policy.

Most Americans (58%) consider it a very important foreign policy goal to combat world hunger, and such humanitarian feelings are evident in many surveys, which show generous public responses to earthquakes, floods, famines, and other disasters abroad. Yet Americans put much less stress on the more far-reaching and difficult goal of improving the standard of living in less developed nations: only 35% considered that a very important goal. Most of the Third World was not seen as a vital interest to the U.S. by majorities of Americans; only 30% considered India vital and 32%, Nigeria, as indicated in Chapter III. The thermometer ratings of these major developing countries did not indicate very high familiarity or regard either. (See Table III-2 and Figures III-1 and III-2)

TABLE IV-2. Tariffs and trade restrictions

"It has been argued that if all countries would eliminate their tariffs and restrictions on imported goods, the costs of goods would go down for everyone. Others have said that such tariffs and restrictions are necessary to protect certain manufacturing jobs in certain industries from the competition of less expensive imports.... Generally, would you say you sympathize more with those who want to eliminate tariffs or those who think such tariffs are necessary?"

	1978			1982		
	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)
Eliminate tariffs	22%	75%	+53	22%	67%	+45
Tariffs are necessary	57	23	−34	57	28	−29
Don't know	21	2	−19	21	5	−16

TABLE IV-3. Economic aid to other nations

	1974	1978			1982		
	Public	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance?"							
Percent in favor	52%	46%	90%	+44	50%	94%	+44
"Overall, do you favor or oppose U.S. economic aid to black African nations?"							
Percent in favor	na	44	88	+44	49	93	+44
"Overall, do you favor or oppose U.S. economic aid to Central American nations?"							
Percent in favor	na	na	na	na	45	91	+46
"Do you feel that U.S. economic aid to Central America is likely to lead to U.S. military involvement in that area?"							
Percent "yes"	na	na	na	na	57	17	–40
"Do you feel economic aid to other countries generally:"							
Positive statements (percent agreeing):							
Helps the economy of other countries	77	78	87	+9	76	88	+12
Helps the national security of other countries	65	72	81	+9	68	83	+15
Helps our national security	44	45	71	+26	44	78	+34
Helps prevent the spread of communism	36	36	51	+15	36	58	+22
Helps our economy at home	25	34	62	+28	30	69	+39
Is worth the economic cost to us	na	na	na	na	30	84	+54
Negative statements (percent agreeing):							
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	73	75	34	–41	75	27	–48
Aggravates relations with other countries	52	64	42	–22	na	na	na
Benefits the rich more than the poor in other countries	na	na	na	na	67	53	–14

This ambivalence is all the more clear when it comes to spending money. A bare majority of Americans (50%) favored, in general terms, aid for economic development and technical assistance; but in the context of a diverse list of government programs, a majority (54%) wanted to *cut back* the already small spending on economic aid, with only 8% wanting an increase. (See Table IV-3) Indeed, a fair number of people (16%) spontaneously mentioned the need to reduce foreign aid as one of the "biggest foreign policy problems" facing the U.S.

Advocates of aid among the public were concentrated in the most traditionally internationalist groups: the college educated (72% favoring it); those attentive to foreign news and those who had traveled abroad.

Some of the reluctance to give aid, as we have indicated, can be traced to the weak state of the U.S. economy. At a time when nearly 11% of Americans were jobless, it seemed natural to many people to worry about problems at home first. And only 30% of the public believed foreign aid helps our economy. Much of the opposition came from those with low income and those holding less lucrative jobs.

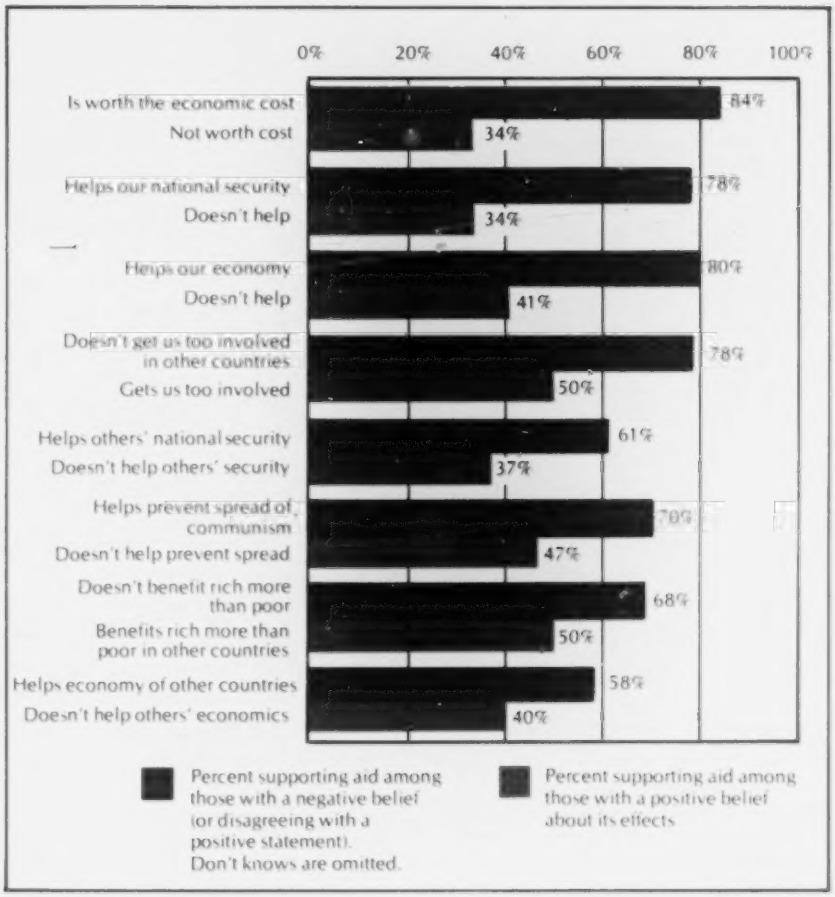
But insofar as opposition to aid reflects motives of economic self-interest, it must be acknowledged that those motives pervade most groups of society. And they do not result simply from a temporary state of recession; resistance to aid (except in wartime) has persisted practically throughout the decades in which polls have been taken. Moreover, some of the resistance to aid also reflects a pervasive skepticism about what it actually can accomplish abroad, as revealed in the answers to our series of questions about the effects of aid. (See Table IV-3)

Most Americans, for example, were willing to grant that aid helps the economies (76%) and the national security (68%) of other countries, but many fewer believed it helps our own national security (44%) or helps prevent the spread of communism (36%). Most Americans (67%) suspected that our aid benefited the rich more than the poor in other countries, and an overwhelming 75% believed it gets us too involved in other countries' affairs. All in all, less than one-third of the American public believed that such aid was worth the economic cost to us.

Of course, mere expression of such beliefs does not demonstrate that they actually affected people's attitudes about aid; nor does it enable us to tell which beliefs were more important. For such purposes it can be helpful to look at Figure IV-1, which shows the level of support for aid among those holding different beliefs. The stronger a relationship (i.e., the bigger the difference in height between adjacent blue and black bars), the more important that factor is likely to be in affecting attitudes toward aid.

By this measure, the most important determinants of attitudes about economic aid were beliefs about effects on U.S. national security and the U.S. economy. Of those thinking aid helps U.S. security, 78% favored aid, but of those thinking it doesn't help, only 34% supported it. Concern about excessive U.S. involvement and beliefs about the effects of aid on the national security of others also affected attitudes toward aid. But altruistic matters, such as helping other countries' economies or not benefiting the rich more than

FIGURE IV-1 Relationships between support for economic aid and beliefs about its effects— 1982 (The Public)



the poor, made little difference to most Americans. (See Figure IV-1)

In other words, the American public tends to evaluate foreign aid from the point of view of U.S. self-interest. And to most Americans, the link to our self-interest, either economically or militarily, is not clear or convincing. Leaders, on the other hand, are more likely to perceive such linkages—and therefore to support foreign aid.

A further hint about fears of excessive involvement is that a substantial plurality of Americans favored economic aid to black African nations (49% to 32%, up from 44-36% in 1978), a question that may evoke humanitarian concerns. But aid to Central America, though closer to home, was supported only by a bare plurality (45% to 38%). Aid to Central America was considered by many (57% to 25%) as likely to lead to military involvement, and most (57%) of those who foresaw involvement opposed such aid, whereas a large majority (71%) of those who did not see military involvement as likely favored aid to Central America. We did not ask a military involvement question about Africa in 1982, but we did in 1978, when prospects of such involvement seemed fairly high. At that time, there was a strong relationship between fear of military involvement in Africa and opposition to aid.

The foreign policy leaders took a very different view of economic aid. On Central America they strongly (76% to 17%) rejected the likelihood of aid leading to military involvement and overwhelmingly (91%) favored economic aid to that area. (See Table IV-3) More generally, a majority (55%) of leaders endorsed as very important (55%) the goal of helping the standard of living of less developed nations. They were much more likely than the public to see a vital U.S. interest in Egypt (90%) as well as in India (57%) and Nigeria (53%).

Nearly all the leaders (94% versus only 50% of the public) favored economic aid in general, and similarly lopsided majorities favored aid to black Africa (93%) and Central America. Of course, leaders tend to have high incomes and to be somewhat insulated from recession, so part of their greater enthusiasm for aid may simply reflect less worry about the domestic economy. But the leaders were also much more likely to see economic aid as helping our economy at home (69% to 30%). In addition, the leaders much more often thought aid helps our own national security (78% to the public's 44%) and helps prevent the spread of communism (58% to 36%). Much less frequently (27% to 75%) did they think it gets us too involved abroad; of course, nearly all leaders favor active involvement abroad anyway. Overall, a large majority of leaders (84% versus the public's 30%) thought aid was worth the cost to us, reflecting a quite different set of beliefs about the world and a much stronger commitment to internationalism.

There exists, then, a major gap between the views of the elite groups we surveyed and the general public on the topic of foreign aid. As Table IV-3 indicates, the gap in policy preferences was some 44 to 46 percentage points in 1982 and about the same four years earlier. Other evidence indicates that this gap has persisted, on these and other issues, for many years.

MILITARY AID

A similar, though narrower, gap exists on questions of military aid. Here the general public is even more negative: fully 63% opposed military aid in general and only 28% supported it. Sixty-three percent wanted to cut back spending on military aid; only 5% wanted to expand it. Again, the poor state of the U.S. economy was one reason; few (39%) thought military aid abroad helps our economy at home. Clearly, however, the reasons go beyond economics because most of the public (53% to 39%) also opposed *selling* military equipment, which would bring in money. (See Table IV-4)

The main reasons for opposition to military aid seem to be simply that few members of the general public believe that it helps our national security (37% to 48%) or that it helps prevent the spread of communism (35%). Instead, they think military aid gets us too involved in other countries' affairs (78%) and aggravates relations with other countries (73%). A large majority of Americans (65% to 14%) believes that it lets dictatorships use their military power against their own people.

Cross-tabulations similar to those we did for economic aid indicate that concerns about U.S. national security and excessive involvement abroad are especially closely related to dislike of military aid. Concern about impact on the U.S. economy and the substitutability of aid for U.S. troops come next while beliefs about effects on other countries' economies and even other countries' national security show the weakest relationships with attitudes toward aid. That is to say, on military aid as well as economic aid, most Americans are preoccupied with matters of U.S. self-interest. In the case of military aid, these matters of self-interest tend to be less economic and more closely involve political relations and national security.

The strong aversion to use of U.S. troops abroad, together with the public's fear that even economic aid could lead to such use in Central America, fits in with fear of excessive involvement as a reason for opposition to aid. Still another factor is suggested by the public's disapproval of Israeli actions in Lebanon and the sentiment, endorsed by 64% in another recent survey, that U.S. weapons sent to Israel should be used for defensive purposes only. Considerably more members of the public (33%) wanted to decrease or stop military aid and arms sales to Israel than wanted to increase them (9%). Israel, of course, has been the leading recipient of U.S. military aid.

The leaders were less concerned than the public about possible negative effects of aid, except for dictators' use of military power (68%). They tended more often to see military aid as helping our economy at home (69% versus the public's 39%), helping our own national security (65% versus 37%), and helping prevent the spread of communism (54% versus 35%). (The leaders were actually *less* likely than the public, however, to see military aid as helping the economies of other countries.) The leaders focused on U.S. security interests: those who believed military aid helps our national security were especially likely (84%) to support aid. Beliefs about excessive U.S. involvement and about preventing the spread of communism and helping the security of others were also strongly related to attitudes toward aid; beliefs about effects on the economies of other countries and on the U.S. economy were weakly related.

Yet the leaders did not issue a resounding endorsement of military aid either. A substantial but not overpowering majority of 59% to 31% favored it in general. The leaders, like the public, more often favored decreasing or stopping (25%) military aid and arms sales to Israel than favored increasing them (5%). Only on the question of *selling* military equipment did more than two-thirds (68%) of leaders express a favorable opinion.

As Table IV-4 indicates, there was a substantial gap between the policy preferences of leaders and public concerning military aid. But that gap was on the order of 30 percentage points, considerably smaller than the 45 or so percentage point gaps in Table IV-3.

STABILITY OF OPINIONS

Finally, it is worth noting that on most matters of economic involvement, opinions of both the public and leaders stayed very nearly the same between 1978 and 1982. We have mentioned some exceptions: decreased perceptions of foreign policy impact on gasoline prices and the value of the dollar but increased perceptions of impact on unemployment at home, for example. Much the same is true of other topics covered in the survey, whether political or military. In most cases opinions have remained fairly constant. Most changes are related to changed world circumstances.

TABLE IV-4. Military aid and arms sales

	1974	1978			1982		
	Public	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations? By military aid I mean arms and equipment but not troops."							
Percent in favor	22%	29%	60%	+31	28%	59%	+31
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our government selling military equipment to other nations?"							
Percent in favor	3533		67	+34	39	68	+29
"Do you think that giving military aid generally:"							
Positive statements (percent agreeing):							
Helps the national security of other countries	69	72	87	+15	71	76	+5
Helps the economy of other countries	60	59	40	−19	55	31	−24
Is a good substitute for the use of American troops and manpower	44	49	70	+21	51	68	+17
Helps our economy at home	31	43	75	+32	39	69	+30
Helps our own national security	36	35	66	+31	37	65	+28
Helps prevent the spread of communism	36	34	53	+19	35	54	+19
Strengthens our political friends abroad	43	46	72	+26	na	na	na
Negative statements (percent agreeing):							
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	78	79	55	−24	78	53	−25
Lets dictatorships use their military power against their own people	59	61	73	+12	65	68	+3
Aggravates relations with other countries	67	73	65	−8	na	na	na

V. U.S. Military Involvement

ATTITUDES ON DEFENSE SPENDING SHIFT

One of the most significant shifts between the 1978 and 1982 public opinion surveys has been in attitudes toward defense spending. This chapter in the previous report described how there had been a change in public opinion in the direction of greater defense efforts between 1974 and 1978. Defense spending was the only major program surveyed to move from a net unfavorable rating in 1974 to a net favorable rating at the time of the second survey. From 1974 to 1978, a 20% shift took place in favor of increased defense spending, from 14% to 34%. During that same period, sentiment for cutting back defense spending declined from 42% to 24%.

The period between 1978 and 1982 has witnessed a drop in public support of defense spending at the same time that the Reagan administration has been expanding budget allocations for the military. This shift undoubtedly reflects satisfaction with administration policy on the part of some former advocates of greater defense spending. It is reasonable to infer as well that there has been a waning of sentiment for more defense spending in the face of much greater domestic unemployment, and significantly growing budget deficits.

In 1982 as well as in 1974 and 1978 attitudes toward defense spending were measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked whether present federal government programs should be "expanded, cut back, or kept about the same." In this context, defense spending was being compared with other domestic programs, including such popular ones as aid to education. When asked in this context, 24% of the public favored expanding defense spending and 34% were for cutting back. This is a literal reversal of the percentages in 1978, when 34% wanted expansion and 24% reduction. Virtually the same proportions were in favor of keeping defense spending at the same levels — 34% in 1978 and 36% in 1982.

When this question was asked later in the survey, with no implied trade-offs with specific other government programs—the results were different: 24% favored cutting back, 52% wanted to maintain the same level, and 21% favored expansion. This again represents a shift since 1978 away from support for greater defense spending; the respective percentages for the question in that year were 16%, 45%, and 32%. As in the past, there was a much greater willingness to reduce defense when choices were posed in terms of competing spending programs.

By either measure, there has been a decrease of approximately the same magnitude in support of more defense spending during the period 1978 to 1982, just as there were comparable increases in support of defense spending expansion between 1974 and 1978. Opinion leaders also reflected the decline of enthusiasm for defense spending. In 1978, 31% wanted to expand that part of the budget and 28% wanted to cut back; by 1982, these percentages had changed to 20% and 41%.

In 1982 for the first time, those who wanted to increase defense spending were asked how to finance this shift. Of the 21% in the popular sample who wanted to expand, only 6% favored paying more taxes while 13% wanted to cut other government programs. Among the 20% of leaders who wanted an increase, however, 9% were willing to pay more taxes and only 8% were disposed to cut other programs (3% "don't know").

Table V-1 puts the findings of the 1974, 1978, and 1982 Council surveys in the broader context of Gallup Poll results on defense spending alone, without reference to other federal programs, going back to 1960. The conclusion suggested by this Table is that support in net terms for greater defense spending peaked in 1960, even more dramatically in 1978, and that 1982 data indicate a reversal in the upward trend that characterized the 1970s. With the recent comparative decline in net support of defense, note that the same percentage favors expansion this time as in 1960 (21%), and a majority feels current spending should be kept the same, though there is stronger sentiment among the public to cut back than was the case in that year (24% now versus 18% then).

Attentiveness to news and belief that the Soviets are militarily superior do not correlate with attitudes toward defense spending. In 1978, 19% of the low attentiveness group wanted to expand defense spending while 52% of the high attentiveness category was for expansion. At that time, the inference was drawn that this reflected a strong feeling on the part of high attentives that the U.S. was falling behind the Soviet Union. In 1982, in contrast, there was much less difference in sentiment when level of attentiveness was controlled. A total of 23% of those highly attentive to foreign news wanted to expand defense spending compared to 19% of those who scored low on the attentiveness scale. There was even less difference among those who were high and low in attentiveness to domestic news.

Previously, there was a strong correlation between support for defense spending and concern about the Soviet Union as a military threat to the United States. This appears to have become less significant in

TABLE V-1. Sentiments on defense spending—The Public — 1982.

1982, 1978, and 1974 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations results compared to Gallup Poll trend. Gallup did not collect data for the period 1960-1968. The CCFR questions were slightly different: 1) Cut back; 2) Keep same; 3) Expand.

	1960	1969	1971	Feb. 1973	Sept. 1973	1974	CCFR 1974	1976	1977	CCFR 1978	CCFR 1982
1. Too much	18%	52%	49%	42%	46%	44%	32%	36%	23%	16%	24%
2. About right	45	31	31	40	30	32	47	32	40	45	52
3. Too little	21	8	11	8	13	12	13	22	27	32	21

TABLE V-2. Sentiments on defense spending by view of Soviet power—The Public—1982

Defense:	Stronger military power: United States	Soviet Union
Expand	20%	37%
Keep same	54	48
Cut back	26	15

1982. In 1978, 69% of those favoring expansion of defense felt the U.S. was falling behind the Soviets; this time, 56% of them felt the Soviets are militarily stronger. The data in Table V-2 reveal that almost half of those who view the Soviets as ahead want to keep our defense at current levels.

As this implies, decline in net advocacy of defense spending has been paralleled by a change in the perception of the military balance between the superpowers. Between the last survey and this one, there has been a decline of 12 points in the percentage of the public believing the United States is stronger militarily than the Soviet Union (from 33% to 21%) but a decline as well of 3 points in the category believing the Soviet Union is stronger (32% to 29%). There has been a great expansion—from 26% in 1978 to 42% in 1982—in the proportion of the public that believes the two superpowers are "about equal." Among leaders, 62% agree that the two states are roughly equal in military power, with 20% believing the United States is stronger and only 15% that the Soviets are stronger. The sentiment among the elite that the U.S. is at least equal to the other side should be kept in mind in analysis of a wide range of foreign policy responses, not just those dealing explicitly with American defense policy.

Another interesting feature of the survey is the willingness of advocates of increased defense spending to pursue cooperative ventures with the Soviet Union. This includes arms control agreements as well as civilian endeavors. Table V-3 highlights this, developing a point already made in Chapter II.

Party identification plays a significant role in views on defense, perhaps reflecting the clearcut views of President Reagan on this subject. A total of 32% of Republicans but only 17% of Democrats were for expanding defense spending; 14% of Republicans and 26% of Democrats wanted to cut back. This is a reversal of the party sentiments on defense as measured by Gallup during the Eisenhower administration, another period when a Republican president held strong views on military spending and helped to fuel important debate on the subject. Figures V-1 and V-2 indicate this significant long-term shift.

Finally, both education and political views have a bearing on attitudes about defense spending. The more formal education a respondent had, the more likely that person was to oppose expansion and favor reduction of defense spending. As party sentiments imply, conservatives are much more in favor of defense spending than liberals. Tables V-4 and V-5 provide details on both of these indices. These Tables are based on the defense question posed in the context of other government programs. Among the elite, religious leaders were particularly opposed to defense spending: only 12% wanted to expand while 52% wanted to cut back. This opposition was surpassed only by that of labor leaders, only 4% of whom wanted to expand, with 54% for cutting back. By contrast, 35% of business leaders wanted to expand and only 16% were for cutting back. Among members of Congress, 30% were for expansion and 40% for reduction.

INTERVENTION

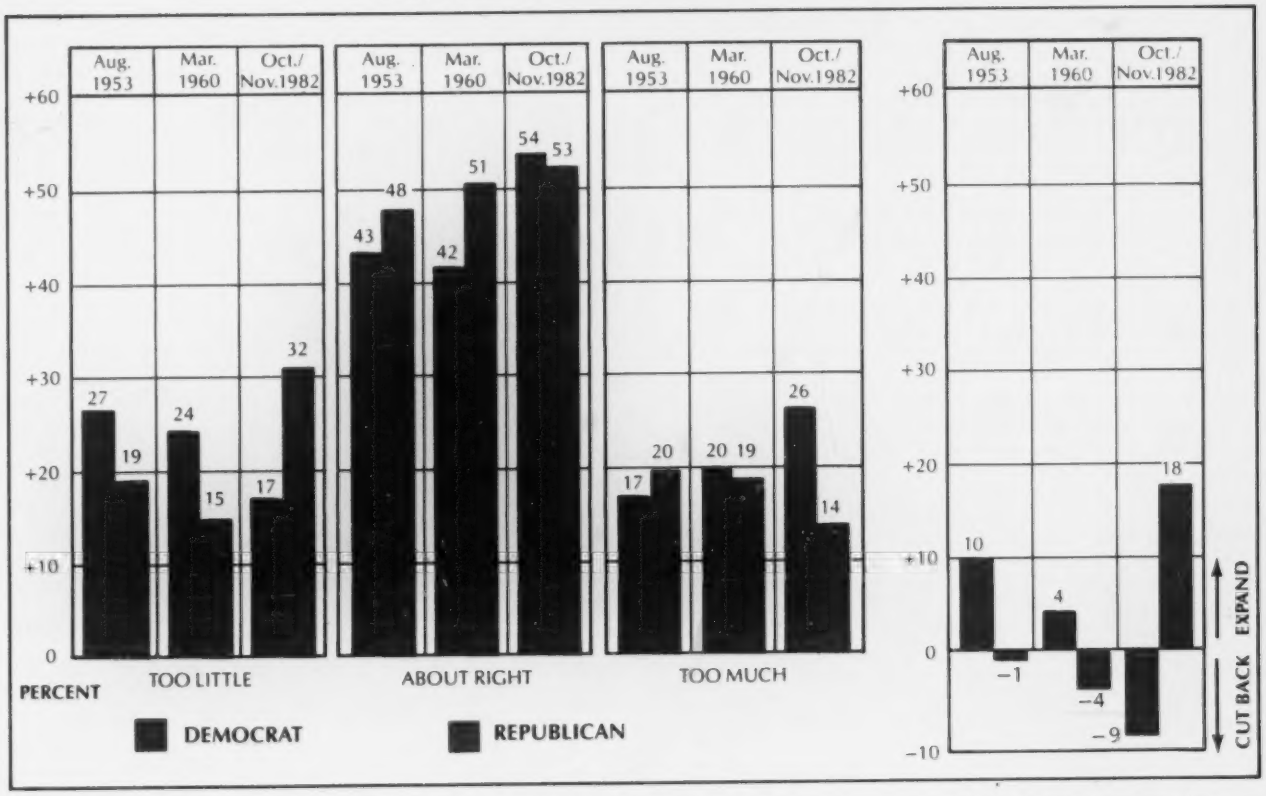
Americans now are more willing to use troops overseas in some circumstances, reflecting a waning of the influence of the Vietnam experience on our thinking about employing force. A majority, however, is willing to use military means in only a few cases. In 1978 the public and leaders were both asked about a range of circumstances in which they would favor or oppose using troops. One clear conclusion to be drawn from the data presented in Table V-6 is that Americans are generally more willing in most cases to use troops now as compared with four years ago. Public and leaders are particularly willing to use troops to protect Western Europe and Japan from Soviet invasion. One difference between the leaders, who are generally more willing to use troops in these circumstances, and the general public concerns Saudi Arabia. If Iran invaded Saudi Arabia, 54% of U.S. leaders would be willing to use troops but only 25% of the public sample felt this way. The trend toward greater willingness to use military force follows a fairly steady line since the 1974 survey.

A greater willingness to use troops has not led to a change in responses about the value and rightness of American efforts in Vietnam. In both 1978 and 1982 people were asked to react to the statement that "the Vietnam war was more than a mistake; it was fundamentally wrong and immoral." In 1978, 72% of the public sample concurred, and this figure did not change in 1982. Among opinion leaders, 45% agreed in 1982, down only a small amount from 50% in this category in the earlier poll. Views on Vietnam do affect willingness to use troops overseas, as Table V-7 reveals.

TABLE V-3. Defense spending and U.S./Soviet cooperation

Policies toward Soviets	Defense Spending: Expand Public	Expand Leaders	Keep same Public	Keep same Leaders	Cut back Public	Cut back Leaders
1. Favor negotiating arms control	78%	91%	87%	98%	88%	97%
2. Favor joint solutions to energy problems	70	64	72	80	82	88
3. Favor trade restrictions	56	36	59	29	41	24
4. Favor scientific exchanges	40	26	45	25	32	8
5. Oppose a grain embargo	58	79	67	88	76	82

FIGURES V-1, 2
SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE BY PARTY AFFILIATION: EISENHOWER AND REAGAN YEARS



In 1953 and 1960, there was a category "No opinion" in th questionnaires. Specific questions:

1953: "Do you think too much of the taxes you pay is being spent for defense—or is too little being spent for defense?"

1960: "There is much discussion as to the amount this country should spend for national defense. How do you feel about this—do you think we are spending too little, too much, or about the right amount?"

1982: "Do you think that we should expand our spending on national defense, keep it about the same, or cut back?"

Index: Percent for more defense spending MINUS percent who want to cut back.

U.S. AND EUROPE

The past four years have witnessed growing economic frictions between the U.S. and its European allies. In the 1982 survey the general public was asked how the U.S. should respond to the Soviet-European natural gas pipeline deal, and opinion leaders were asked about the planned deployment of new cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe in 1983. On the public side, the most popular response (37%) was that we should "let our allies pursue policies they think best." A total of 27% were for putting diplomatic pressure on the Europeans, and only 15% favored economic sanctions if other methods did not work. On the missiles question, fully 67% of the elite agreed that deployment of

TABLE V-4. Education and attitudes toward defense spending—1982

Spending:	Education: Grades 1-8	Grades 9-11	High School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate
Expand	29%	29%	28%	26%	15%
Keep same	43	40	39	39	31
Cut back	28	31	33	35	54

TABLE V-5. Political spectrum and attitudes toward defense spending—1982

Spending:	Attitudes: Conservative	Middle Road	Liberal
Expand	32%	24%	19%
Keep same	39	42	30
Cut back	29	34	51

TABLE V-6. U.S. response to crisis situations—1982

"There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about several situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops if:"

Asked of opponents of sending troops on the asterisked items:

"I am going to read the circumstances under which you said you would oppose sending U.S. troops. On this card are levels of U.S. involvement that might be appropriate under these circumstances. For each situation, tell me how far you feel the U.S. should be willing to go."

Situations:		Opposed to sending troops		Do nothing		Try to negotiate		Refuse to trade		Send military supplies		Send troops		Don't know	
		Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Soviets invade Japan	1978	58%	19%	13%	1%	20%	6%	3%	1%	9%	9%	42%	81%	13%	2%
	1982	49	22									51	78		
Arabs cut off oil to U.S.*	1978	64	71	5	1	34	37	12	27	1	1	36	29	12	5
	1982	61	64	4	—	33	47	15	26	2	4	39	36	10	1
N. Korea invades S. Korea	1978	79	55	24	6	28	13	3	2	9	30	21	45	15	4
	1982	78	50									22	50		
Leftist guerrillas about to defeat government of El Salvador*	1982	80	90	18	15	29	43	7	7	11	36	20	10	15	2
Iran invades Saudi Arabia	1982	75	46									25	54		
Arabs invade Israel	1978	78	69	14	2	38	27	3	1	8	35	22	31	15	4
	1982	70	53									30	47		
China invades Taiwan	1978	80	82	25	12	27	44	5	5	7	17	20	18	16	4
	1982	82	85									18	15		
Soviets invade Poland*	1982	69	94	10	10	27	40	13	49	9	11	31	6	13	3
Soviets invade West Europe*	1978	46	8	9	—	16	3	2	—	6	4	54	92	13	1
	1982	35	8	5	—	14	5	4	2	4	4	65	92	9	1
Soviets invade China	1982	79	94									21	6		

TABLE V-7. Willingness to use troops and Vietnam War attitudes —1982

Use troops if:	The Vietnam War "...fundamentally wrong and immoral." Agree strongly Public	Agree strongly Leaders	Disagree strongly Public	Disagree strongly Leaders
Soviets invade Japan	46%	66%	68%	81%
Arabs cut off oil	36	27	52	48
North Korea invades South Korea	16	25	58	68
Rebels winning in El Salvador	16	1	38	23
Soviets invade West Europe	58	86	85	96

the missiles should begin but "...stop if the Soviets agree to limit their own missiles in Europe." Only 19% picked another response to "go ahead deploying the missiles in Europe," and 10% selected the course of not basing the missiles at all. On neither issue was there sentiment for an uncompromising course. Concerning the pipeline, the public apparently does not agree with the initial Reagan administration policy.

NUCLEAR FREEZE

The subject of a nuclear freeze between the United States and the Soviet Union and the related question of unilateral or mutually agreed nuclear arms control have become increasingly visible in political debate in both the United States and Europe. Obviously, the issues involved bear directly on NATO as well as on

superpower relations. In the 1982 survey, a specific question was asked to elicit sentiments on this matter. The public and opinion leaders were queried about attitudes toward nuclear weapons and the freeze. The latter was described as "...a mutual, verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons, that is, a freeze agreed to by both sides, with inspections. Would you favor such a freeze?"

On nuclear weapons, there was substantial support for a mutual freeze. A total of 19% of the public agreed that "the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons even it the Soviet Union does not," compared with only 11% of opinion leaders who felt that way. On the other hand, a significant 26% of the public agreed that "the U.S. should continue to build nuclear weapons regardless of what the Soviets do." Only 6% of the opinion leaders concurred with that approach. Finally, 49% of the public and 79% of the leaders selected the third option, that "the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons only if the Soviet Union agrees to do so."

Totals of 58% of the public and 79% of the opinion leaders said they were for a freeze "right now, if the Soviets would agree"; 21% of the public and 14% of the leaders were for a freeze "only after the U.S. builds up its nuclear weapons more"; 12% of the public and 5% of the leaders were "not at all" in favor of the freeze approach. Among occupational groups within the opinion leader constituency, religious professionals, not surprisingly, were notable for their support of both the freeze and nuclear disarmament. A total of 26% of religious leaders would stop building nuclear weapons even if the Soviets did not, compared with 14% of media representatives (the next most supportive group), 6% of members of Congress, and 5% of business leaders. Only labor professionals, at 93%, surpassed religious professionals, at 90%, in concurring that they would favor a nuclear freeze immediately, with Soviet agreement. These percentages compare with 46% of members of the administration, 68% of members of Congress, 70% of business leaders, and 82% of educators who felt that way.

ROLE OF THE MILITARY

The Council report of 1979 indicated some marginal increase in the desired influence of the military. The most recent survey indicates that the military is still perceived as important, but fewer people want that particular institution to become more important in the future. This may reflect the significant domestic political debate over budgetary priorities, Congressional pressure for defense cuts, and generally strong pressure from the Reagan administration for greatly expanded defense spending.

In both 1978 and 1982, 40% of the public answered that the military plays a very important role in foreign policy. Among leaders, those answering that way increased from 29% to 36% while those saying the military role was hardly important decreased from 16% to 11%.

There have been changes regarding the role the military *should* play. One significant shift between 1974 and 1978 was among members of the public who believed the military should play a greater role in foreign policy; this category increased from 19% to 29%. In 1978, 23% of the public felt a less important role should be played. In 1982 the figures were 26% for both a more and a less important military, representing a shift of 6% away from a "pro-military" position. Among leaders, only 3% wanted a more important military, compared with 10% who gave that response in 1978, and 48% wanted a less important military, compared with 39% before.

VI. Who Shapes U.S. Foreign Policy?

There is no more important question in a representative democracy than how political leaders are held accountable for their actions and how the governed influence the governors. This relates to the questions of who is perceived to make decisions, who has the right to do so, and whom one can trust to convey information. It also relates to similarities or differences between actual policy and the preferences of foreign policy leaders and ordinary citizens.

The low level of public confidence in political leaders and political institutions continues—as does the public preference for strengthening the role of populist institutions (Congress, the media, and public opinion itself) in the decision-making process. Moreover, our data indicate that a number of Reagan administration policies are not in harmony with the wishes of the general public or foreign policy leaders.

WHO ARE THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN DETERMINING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

Once again, the president is perceived to be the dominant actor in shaping U.S. foreign policy, with 70% of the public perceiving his role as "very important," about the same level as in 1978. Among leaders, his role is considered even more important, with 91% according him "a very important role," up slightly from four years ago.

In the view of both the public and the leaders, however, the secretary of state's role has increased, very slightly on the public scale (64% calling it very important, compared to 61% in 1978) and substantially among the leaders, with an increase of 20% (from 63% to 83%). This shift no doubt reflects the strong roles that Secretary Alexander Haig and George Shultz have played in the current foreign policy process over the past two years, compared to the more passive role of their predecessors. It may also reflect the more passive role that President Reagan is perceived to play in the day-to-day making of American foreign policy. (See Table VI-1)

On the elite side, a substantial shift occurred in relation to the role of Congress, with the proportion of leaders considering Congress' role as "very important" dropping from 45% to 34% and the proportion considering it "hardly important" increasing by 4%. On the question of the *preferred* Congressional role, many leaders (34%) believe Congress should play a more important role, with considerably fewer (15%) believing it should be less important. The pro-Congress sentiment rose somewhat between 1978 and 1982. This reversed the trend from 1974 to 1978, when enthusiasm of both public and leaders for a stronger congressional role decreased. (See Table VI-2)

When the question was rephrased to focus specifically on the role of Congress in relationship to the president, a similar trend emerged. The percentage of the public believing Congress played "too strong" a role increased 6% from 1974 to 1978 and dropped slightly from 1978 to 1982. Similarly, those who thought Congress' role was too weak dropped 9 points between 1974 and 1978, but during the last four years it increased slightly. On the leadership side, the trend was even stronger. The proportion who felt the role of Congress was too strong dropped 12 percentage points (from 30% to 18%), and those who felt Congress' role was too weak increased by 7%, from 25% to 32%.

Although the sentiment for a stronger role for Congress in relation to the president is less prevalent than it was in 1974, just after the Watergate crisis and the departure of President Nixon, it still has risen significantly over a four-year period. Taken together with the slight drops in the number of those favoring an increased presidential role, both on the popular and leadership side, it would seem to indicate that the general performance of the last two presidents in office, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, has not inspired overwhelming confidence. Hence the shift toward a preference for a

TABLE VI-1. Role of different institutions in making foreign policy—1982

"How important a role do you think the following currently play in determining the foreign policy of the United States — a very important role, a somewhat important role, or hardly an important role at all?"

	Percent "Very Important"			
	Public 1974	Public 1978	Public 1982	Leaders 1982
The President	69%	72%	70%	91%
Secretary of State	73	61	64	83
State Department	38	45	47	38
Congress	39	45	46	34
American Business	41	41	35	22
The Military	36	40	40	36
United Nations	28	31	29	2
The CIA	28	29	28	20
Public Opinion	19	26	23	15
Labor Unions	24	25	17	3
Private Foreign Policy Organizations	na	12	9	3
National Security Advisor	na	na	35	46

TABLE VI-2. *Preferred* role of institutions in making foreign policy

"Do you feel the roles of the following should be more important than they are now, should be less important than they are now, or should be about as important as they are now?"

	Percent "More Important"			
	Public 1974	Public 1978	Public 1982	Leaders 1982
The President	45%	44%	39%	17%
Secretary of State	30	35	33	22
State Department	39	35	34	34
Congress	48	43	44	34
American Business	21	27	23	22
The Military	19	29	26	3
United Nations	41	39	37	33
The CIA	15	18	16	9
Public Opinion	59	62	54	36
Labor Unions	17	17	17	14
Private Foreign Policy Organizations	na	11	10	21
National Security Advisor	na	na	31	13

larger Congressional role. It also probably reflects some uneasiness — if not resistance — to some specific elements of President Reagan's foreign policy during the past two years.

Turning to other actors in the foreign policy process, the United Nations continues to decline in perceived influence among both the public and the leaders. Only 29% of the public regarded the UN very important while 28% regarded it as hardly important, an increase of 6% over a four-year period. On the leadership side, a similar shift occurred, with only 2% regarding the UN as "very important" and 77% regarding it as "hardly important" — an increase of 9% since 1978. Among both the public and leaders, substantially more thought the UN should play a more important part than thought it should be less important. And about half of the public thought that strengthening the UN should be a "very important" goal of U.S. foreign policy.

Another significant trend relates to the role of the military. Here, the public is on average content with the influence of the military in the foreign policy process (26% for an increase; 26% for a decrease). But on the leadership side there is strong sentiment for a less important military role (48% versus 3% for a more important role), up 9% from 1978. This is another indication of diminished support for the role of the military and defense spending as compared to 1978. It probably reflects increasing resistance to the proposed military buildup during the first two years of the Reagan administration.

A populist view continues to prevail among the public in regard to the role of Congress in the foreign policy process, with 46% regarding Congress as very important and 44% believing it should be even more important — only 11% saying less important. Related to this is the public's continued strong preference for increasing the role of public opinion in foreign policy, with 54% favoring a larger role. It is public opinion and Congress — an institution thought of as more directly responsive to the people — that are given the strongest popular support for an increased role in foreign policy. Over the last eight years, larger roles for Congress and public opinion have consistently received the strongest support, substantially more than the president, the secretary of state, or the State Department. Although the media were not listed among alternative actors, it is significant that television

TABLE VI-3. Reliability of foreign policy information sources—The Public

"We are interested in knowing how reliable you feel various sources of information on foreign policy are: very reliable, somewhat reliable, or hardly reliable at all."

	Very Reliable			Somewhat Reliable			Hardly Reliable At All			Not Sure		
	1974	1978	1982	1974	1978	1982	1974	1978	1982	1974	1978	1982
Television News	35%	30%	32%	50%	53%	56%	13%	14%	8%	2%	3%	4%
Radio News	29	24	25	51	56	57	13	12	8	7	8	10
Magazines	27	21	26	46	50	49	14	15	10	13	14	15
Newspapers	27	26	31	54	53	53	15	15	9	4	6	7
The Presidency	26	32	24	47	48	49	18	15	19	9	5	8
The State Department	36	16	15	42	51	52	15	21	20	7	12	13
Foreign Policy Leaders in Congress	11	11	8	48	46	49	28	27	26	14	16	17
Talking to Friends	11	6	6	41	33	36	39	53	48	9	8	10
Private Foreign Policy Organizations	8	6	6	34	31	34	30	30	27	28	33	33

TABLE VI-4. Apparent disagreements between the public and the Reagan administration --1982.

	Proportion of the Public giving each response	
Military spending and the arms race		
U.S. and U.S.S.R. military power:		
About equal 42%	U.S. stronger 21%	U.S.S.R. stronger 29%
Defense spending:		
Cut back 34%	Keep the same 36%	Expand 24%
Spending on national defense (asked later in the questionnaire):		
Cut back 24%	Keep the same 52%	Expand 21%
Relations with the Soviet Union		
Resuming cultural and educational exchanges:		
	Favor 70%	Oppose 19%
Undertaking joint efforts to solve energy problems:		
	Favor 64%	Oppose 23%
Cuba		
Negotiate to reestablish diplomatic and economic relations:		
	Favor 48%	Oppose 37%
South Africa		
Take a more active role in opposing apartheid:		
	Agree 45%	Disagree 39%
Western Europe		
Reaction to allies helping Soviets build natural gas pipeline:		
Let them pursue policies they think best 37%	Put on diplomatic pressure 27%	Economic sanctions 15%
Vietnam		
War was fundamentally wrong and immoral:		
	Agree 72%	Disagree 21%
U.S. handling of recent crises		
Declaration of martial law in Poland:		
	Fair or poor 54%	Excellent or good 24%
Fighting between government and rebels in El Salvador:		
	Fair or poor 57%	Excellent or good 18%
The Israeli invasion of Lebanon:		
	Fair or poor 53%	Excellent or good 29%
Military aid		
Giving military aid—arms and equipment—to other nations:		
	Oppose 63%	Favor 28%
Military aid to other nations:		
Cut back 65%	Keep the same 22%	Expand 5%
Selling military equipment to other nations:		
	Oppose 53%	Favor 39%
Economic aid		
Economic aid to other nations:		
Cut back 54%	Keep the same 31%	Expand 8%
CIA		
Place CIA under greater restraint:		
Greater restraint 25%	Keep the same 43%	Fewer restrictions 15%
Domestic priorities		
Foreign policy goal of protecting the jobs of American workers:		
Very important 77%	Somewhat important 17%	Not important 3%
Federal aid to education:		
Expand 59%	Keep the same 31%	Cut back 7%
Social Security:		
Expand 49%	Keep the same 40%	Cut back 6%
Biggest problems facing the country today:		
	Unemployment, recession 64%	

news is regarded as a very reliable source of information on foreign policy by more people (32%) than any other institution—more than the presidency (24%), the State Department (15%), or foreign policy leaders in Congress (8%). Newspapers (31%) rate about the same as television.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THEIR RELIABILITY

Once again the main source of information about foreign affairs for most of the public was television (cited by 75%), with newspapers second (54%), radio third (23%), and magazines fourth (18%). When asked to assess how reliable various sources of information on foreign policy are, television news once again came out on top with 32% saying "very reliable," about the same as in 1978. Newspapers were second with 31%, which represented a 5% increase over 1978. Magazines (26%) and radio news (25%) were next in line as "very reliable sources." Among all the listed sources, the presidency suffered the biggest drop from 1978, declining from 32% in that year to 24% in 1982. (See Table VI-3)

Once again the media (whether television and radio, newspapers, or magazines) were regarded as more reliable sources of information on foreign policy than the State Department (15%), the presidency (24%), foreign policy leaders in Congress (8%), or private foreign policy organizations (6%). Of course, information from the latter sources usually reaches the public indirectly through the media so that there is some difficulty in distinguishing between their credibility and that of the media.

During the Vietnam and post-Vietnam period, the media were widely regarded by some as a more effective check on the power of the presidency than the constitutionally authorized institutions of Congress. With recently increased critical attention being focused on the various media and especially television, one might expect that this would be reflected in trends about the perceived reliability of sources of information. The data here do not reflect that. Rather, they seem to indicate that the media are still regarded as a necessary and to a considerable extent reliable check on the exercise of power by those in governmental positions.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN PUBLIC OPINION AND THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

At various points in this report we have noted discrepancies between current foreign policy and the preferences of the public. Some cases in which public opinion appears to disagree with Reagan administration policy are summarized in Table VI-4.

Perhaps the most important area of conflict concerns military spending and the nuclear arms race. At a time when the administration was urging an arms buildup and preparing a request for a large increase (approximately 14%) in the defense budget for fiscal year 1984, less than one-quarter of the public favored expanding defense spending. The center of gravity of public opinion favored keeping spending the same, and more Americans wanted to cut back spending than wanted to expand it. The administration's argument that the Soviet Union had achieved military superiority was accepted by less than one-third of the public; nearly as many considered the U.S. stronger, and the prevailing opinion held that the superpowers were about equal. (See Table VI-4)

Similarly, only a minority of about one-third of the public opposed a nuclear arms freeze altogether or endorsed President Reagan's position that a freeze should not come until after further U.S. military buildup. A majority (58%) favored a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons right now if the Soviets would agree.

The general public also showed more interest in cooperative relations with the Soviet Union than has been displayed by the administration. Large majorities of 70% and 64% favored cultural and educational exchanges and undertaking joint efforts with the Russians to solve energy problems. A plurality also favored entering into negotiations looking toward reestablishing diplomatic and economic relations and exchanging ambassadors with Cuba. The administration, calling Cuba the chief troublemaker in Central America, has expressed little interest in such negotiations.

The public — by a small plurality — favored a more active role in opposing apartheid in South Africa, whereas most observers would maintain that the administration has moved somewhat in the opposite direction. Only a very small minority (15%) of Americans supported the administration's economic sanctions on Western Europe over the Soviet natural gas pipeline; the sanctions were removed shortly after our survey, ending one conflict between the administration and public opinion. On a matter concerning perspectives rather than specific policies —but perspectives that bear on future involvement abroad — a strong majority (72%) of the public agreed that the war in Vietnam was fundamentally wrong and immoral. President Reagan has repeatedly rejected that view.

Majorities of Americans also gave low marks ("fair" or "poor") to the administration's handling of several foreign policy crises: the declaration of martial law in Poland; fighting between the government and rebels in El Salvador; and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

By large majorities (63% and 65%), the American public opposed giving military aid to other nations and favored cutting back money spent for that purpose, at a time when the administration was increasing arms aid. A majority of the public (53%) also opposed *selling* military equipment to other nations, whereas the administration has approved greatly increased arms sales.

Underlining the significance of these policy disagreements, many Americans wanted both Congress and public opinion to play a more important part in making U.S. foreign policy; very few favored a less important role.

Our survey has confirmed what many political observers have noted: the budget priorities of the Reagan administration, emphasizing cuts in domestic programs and large increases in defense spending, directly contradict the priorities held by most members of the public.

A large majority of Americans cited unemployment and the recession as among the biggest problems facing the country, and 77% declared that protecting the jobs of American workers was a very important goal of foreign policy: more endorsed than any other goal. About half of the American people wanted to expand Social Security and federal aid to education while only 6 or 7% favored cuts; this was contrary to the situation on defense spending, where more of the public favored cuts than favored expansion.

One should be cautious in assessing precisely what the discrepancies between the administration and public opinion signify. For one thing, as our report makes clear, on many other issues the Reagan administration and the public are in fairly close agreement. And past administrations, too, have had some conflicts with public opinion. Yet the cases of disagreement highlighted in this section are numerous and important. Compared with those of previous administrations, they seem unusually broad.

TABLE VI-5. Gaps in policy preferences between foreign policy leaders and the public—1982

Public (% holding opinion)	Leaders (% holding opinion)	Gap (% Leaders minus % Public)
Involvement abroad		
Best to take an active part in world affairs:		
54%	98%	+44
Foreign economic aid		
Favor economic aid to other nations for economic development and technical assistance:		
50%	94%	+44
Favor economic aid to Central American nations:		
45%	91%	+46
Favor economic aid to black African nations:		
49%	93%	+44
Tariffs and trade restrictions		
Favor eliminting tariffs and restrictions:		
22%	67%	+45
Apartheid in South Africa		
We should take a more active role in opposing apartheid:		
45%	79%	+34
Foreign military aid		
Favor giving military aid—arms and equipment—to other nations:		
28%	59%	+31
Favor *selling* military equipment to other nations:		
39%	68%	+29
Relations with Cuba		
Favor reestablishing relations:		
48%	81%	+33
Use of military force		
Goal of defending our allies' security is very important:		
50%	82%	+32
Favor use of U.S. troops if Iran invaded Saudi Arabia:		
25%	54%	+29
Favor use of U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea:		
22%	50%	+28
Favor use of U.S. troops of Soviet troops invaded Western Europe:		
65%	92%	+27
Favor use of U.S. troops if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union:		
51%	78%	+27
Favor use of U.S. troops if the Soviet Union invaded Poland:		
31%	6%	−25
Agree Vietnam was fundamentally wrong and immoral:		
72%	45%	−27
Relations with the Soviet Union		
Oppose restricting U.S.—Soviet trade:		
40%	69%	+29
Oppose prohibiting the exchange of scientists between U.S. & U.S.S.R.:		
52%	79%	+27
Oppose forbidding grain sales to Soviet Union:		
57%	81%	+24
Favor resuming cultural and educational exchanges:		
70%	94%	+24
Favor negotiating arms control agreements:		
77%	96%	+19
Arms control		
Goal of worldwide arms control is very important:		
64%	86%	+22
Favor a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons right now if the Soviets would agree:		
58%	79%	+21
U.S. should continue to build nuclear weapons regardless of what the Soviets do:		
26%	6%	−20

In a democratic society we would expect to find, at least in the long run, general harmony between the government and the people. One path to harmony is for government to change policy and fall into line with the preferences of its citizens. Another path, if leaders are convinced that the citizenry is misinformed, is for leaders to convince the people to change their minds. So far, on a number of important issues the Reagan administration has neither changed policy nor convinced the public. A third path to harmony, of course, is for the public to change leadership.

Some further insight into these matters may be gained by reviewing the gaps we have noted at various points in this report, between the policy preferences of the general public and those of our sample of foreign policy leaders. If the administration is to convince the public of the rightness of its positions, one would expect that foreign policy leaders would have to bear the heavy burden of using their expertise to establish support for administration views and lead public opinion into agreement. Yet, as we shall see, there is considerable doubt about the ability of these leaders to convince the public, and —perhaps even more important—there is little comfort for the administration in the leaders' opinions. On a number of key matters the leaders disagree with the Reagan administration just as much as, or even more, than the public.

GAPS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND FOREIGN POLICY LEADERS

The largest gaps in policy preferences that we found between the public and foreign policy leaders are displayed in Table VI-5. The table gives the percentage of the public favoring a particular position; the percentage of leaders; and the size of the gap between them, that is, the percentage of leaders minus the percentage of the public.

As we have noted before, there is a large gap (44%) in the proportions favoring an active part for the U.S. in world affairs. The leaders express much more internationalist and interventionist sentiments generally, and this is clear on a number of specific topics as well.

The biggest differences are those discussed in Chapter IV on economic relationships. The leaders were much more likely than the public, by about forty-five percentage points, to support economic aid in general and aid to black Africa and Central America in particular. The leaders also were much more in favor of eliminating tariffs and trade restrictions.

The gap was only a little smaller on questions of military aid. About 30% more of the leaders than of the general public favored giving arms and equipment, or selling it, to other nations.

The leaders were also substantially (about 30 percentage points) more likely to favor the use of U.S. troops in a variety of hypothetical situations: an invasion of Saudi Arabia by Iran; of South Korea by North Korea; or of Western Europe or Japan by the Soviet Union. Each of these situations involves major U.S. alliances and/or clearly expressed national interests. In less clear-cut situations, however, the leaders were *less* prone to favor use of troops, most notably in the case of a Soviet invasion of Poland. The leaders also were less favorable than the public toward the use of U.S. troops in the event of a Soviet invasion of China or of imminent defeat by rebels of the government of El Salvador.

At the same time, the leaders were less prone than the public to favor covert operations by the CIA; indeed, a majority of leaders opposed such operations. And the leaders were more favorable toward a variety of cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union: selling grain and trading; engaging in cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges; and negotiating arms control agreements. Many more leaders than members of the general public favored negotiating to reestablish economic and political relations with Cuba.

More leaders favored arms control, as well, and endorsed a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons right now if the Soviets would agree. The leaders also showed somewhat more concern about human rights, at least in the case of actively opposing apartheid in South Africa.

The foreign policy leaders—perhaps by virtue of their very specialization on foreign policy — were substantially less concerned about the domestically-oriented goals of protecting the jobs of American workers or keeping up the value of the American dollar.

Finally, the leaders differed from the public in less often wanting to increase the role of the military or of the president in the making of foreign policy.

For the Reagan administration, these gaps between leaders and public convey a mixed message at best. In some cases the administration can look to these leaders for support of policies that are not popular with the general public. That is particularly true of foreign aid (economic and military) and resistance to tariffs or other trade barriers. It might be true also of certain uses of U.S. troops in clear-cut situations.

But the administration does *not* receive support from the leaders on many of the issues where it is in conflict with public opinion. On military spending, for example, leaders were no more likely than the public to want to expand the defense budget, and indeed substantially more leaders (41%) than members of the public wanted to *cut* it. On arms control, as we have seen, even more leaders than members of the public favored a nuclear freeze.

On cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union, too, the leaders were even more enthusiastic than the public, contrary to the administration's position. The leaders overwhelmingly favored negotiations with that *bête noir* of the administration, Castro's Cuba, and disapproved of the administration's handling of the situation in El Salvador.

The leaders also differed with the administration more than did the public in opposing CIA covert operations and in actively opposing apartheid in South Africa.

On balance, then, there are many areas in which the Reagan administration has been out of tune with the public's desires and in disagreement with foreign policy leaders as well.

We have used the term "leaders" as a shorthand way of referring to our sample of public officials and prominent individuals active in foreign affairs, but of course we cannot be sure just how much influence they actually have, either upon the public or in policymaking itself. Recent scholarly research using our 1974 and 1978 surveys has documented that substantial gaps between leaders and public also existed in those earlier years. Moreover, the gaps were much the same size and concerned much the same topics as in the 1982 survey, suggesting that little if any change of leadership opinion occurred in the interim. (Robert W. Oldendick and Barbara Ann Bardes, "Mass and Elite Foreign Policy Opinions," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 46 (Fall 1982), pp. 368-382.)

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